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by Walton E. Bean

IDEAS, EMOTIONS, AND HISTORY

AS these words are written, the realization of a working agreement between the ideologies of Communism and National Socialism has done violence to something else than Poland, and something else than peace. That something is the notion that modern human history is a conflict between ideas—that, indeed, ideas of themselves are primary historical factors at all. Only a minority of Americans heretofore have protested against the naïveté of the “Coming Struggle for Power” theory. Now, that theory has suddenly and utterly collapsed: the two dominant idea-systems, suits of shining armor which were to lead millions of men in their earth-shaking struggle are seen to be capable of being tossed on the intellectual junk-pile, at a moment’s notice, by *two* men.

It is not that the shining idea-systems were unimportant. They served their purpose on a tremendously successful scale, but the point is that their rôle was secondary, the rôle of disguise that ideas usually play in the thinking of individuals as well as in that of nations or individuals. The persistent rumor that Hitler has

a double to make his public appearances for him is quite true in this sense. The double, who fooled almost everybody, was the Hitler who was saving Europe from the doctrine of Communism. The sudden appearance of the real Hitler has one advantage. It clears the air. Now, the rôle that ideas in general play in history in general can be, and has to be, entirely reexamined.

More clearly now than ever before, we see that ideas as causes in history can be understood only in their relations to other factors, particularly other psychological factors. Since recent events create such an unmistakeable demand for light on the problems of these relations, future historians will be forced to deal with the problem whether they want to or not. This essay, with special attention to American historians, presents a review of what writing may be called, for want of a better name, a "psychological interpretation of history". The whole field of social psychology, of course, closely associated with this subject; but, while certain work in this and in other social sciences will be mentioned, the present writer feels that the problem of the psychological factors in history must be in the future peculiarly the concern of historians. European scholarship in the subject has been far ahead of American. The idea of a "psychological interpretation" of history may be said to have begun with Taine and Karl Lamprecht. Max Nordau's *THE INTERPRATION OF HISTORY* (translated 1911) is a good example of later work in the field. The future, however, is another story. Precious little honest thinking can be done in Europe, now, for a sickeningly long time, and no American scholar can be unconscious of the resulting increase in his responsibilities. For these reasons, the present essay is primarily interested in the writing of American historians.

These gentlemen have been, in most cases, peculiarly reluctant to concern themselves with *any* phase of the broader interpretation of the "facts" which they unearth.¹ History is the only science in which the investigator works diligently, leaves it to other fields to tell him the meaning of what he is done, and then complains because he is unsatisfied with the explanation. Historians should remember, when they complain that the interpretation of

¹For analysis of this attitude and recent protests against it, see the present writer's article, "Revolt Among Historians" in the July, 1939 number of the *SEWANEE REVIEW*.

their field is done badly by philosophers, sociologists, and men of letters, that they themselves have largely neglected, not only to do it any better but to do it at all.

In the case of the psychological interpretation, this neglect by American historical scholars has been particularly evident. Professor A. M. Schlesinger, while he mentioned it in his *NEW VIEWPOINTS IN AMERICAN HISTORY* (1922), remarked only that while it was a promising idea, the development of it by historians lay entirely in the future. But the recent and present tremendous increase in the importance, the use, and the technical efficiency of mass emotional propaganda make a recognition and understanding of the effects of psychological forces on historical events more important than ever before. T. S. Stripling made *THE SOUND WAGON* a sort of symbol of contemporary American politics. The most vivid scene in Ignazio Silone's story of Fascist Italy, *BREAD AND WINE*, is the gathering around the radio on the sound truck, in the square of the little mountain village, to hear the speech from Rome, which is drowned out because the people in the back of the crowd are still shouting "*Doo-chaydoo-chaydoo-chaydoo-chay!*" and cannot hear that the speech has begun. And the really brilliant passages in Hitler's *MEIN KAMPF* are the amazingly frank ones which deal with the techniques of effective emotional propaganda. In this, *der Führer* must be recognized as a great scientist and a great artist.

With the outbreak of war, the American public has learned to be critical of all "information" to a remarkable degree, in contrast to its naïve readiness and desire to believe anything in 1917. In most cases, it still realizes how cold-bloodedly "the psychology factor" in "the strategic equation" will be engineered, not only by Dr. Goebbels, but by Minister of Information Lord Macmillan, and Commissioner of Information M. Giraudoux. But how long this initial critical attitude can last is another question. As Max Nordau pointed out long before Hitler did, the common man is naturally credulous, not critical, and he is anxious to follow leaders who furnish him with formulae to take the place of thought. With emotional propaganda becoming a highly developed science, the "Colleges of Emotional Engineering" envisioned in Aldous Huxley's *BRAVE NEW WORLD* may soon become a reality, turning out expert miners and sappers against whom

the rickety walls of understanding and intelligent criticism cannot stand. Whatever historians can do to strengthen these walls of understanding should be done, and a recognition of the relations of ideas and emotions as historical factors is perhaps the best contribution that historians can make.

Dr. Henry Seidel Canby's remarks in an editorial called "Emotion and History" are very applicable here:

The economic interpretation of history has been given a black eye by the rise of fascism. Perhaps it is a good time for the amateurs of history to make some suggestions to the professionals. . . . Since the economists came in, emotion, whether love, vanity, jealousy, hurt pride, inferiority, or ambition, has been shown the back door. . . . Without the assistance of the economists it would be impossible to understand some of the causes of Europe's disorders. But how little of the story could be told to an outsider who did not know of the inordinate vanity of Mussolini working upon a nation which wished to be vain, the fanatical self-love of Hitler working upon a nation which wished to be proud. . . . Frankly, we are skeptical of the whole magnificent program of explaining human actions with the humanity of the human left out.²

These views of Dr. Canby's illustrate a fact that must be made clear before the work that has been done on the psychological interpretation of history in America can be understood: namely, that this view, this insistence on the psychological forces that affect historical events, has grown up largely as a kind of protest or revolt against an overemphasis on the *economic* interpretation of history. Perhaps the most valid criticism of the economic interpretation as such has been that it closes its eyes to psychological, subjective factors: that, even granting the predominance of economic pressures on human beings, it is the psychological reactions inspired by these influences rather than the influences themselves that are really important. But in decrying what they considered the overemphasis on the economic aspect, too many writers have laid a corresponding overemphasis on the psychological. In objecting to the view that the forces which motivate human affairs were *entirely* economic, the equally extreme view has too often been advanced that these forces were *entirely* psychological in nature. Thus Arthur J. Todd commented on the

²SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE, September 18, 1937.

economic interpretation in his THEORIES OF SOCIAL PROGRESS (1918): "Even more serious than the neglect of the race factor is the omission of the psychological elements in history and contemporary social life. . . . It is safe to deny that there is any such thing as the economic, *per se*." Wilson D. Wallis, pointing out the subjectivity of all human activity, remarked that "in the last analysis, it is only with the manifestations of mind that history is concerned."³ This view of the all-inclusive character of the psychological interpretation has been well stated by Harry Elmer Barnes, who believes that it is rightfully held to be

the most scientific, because it is now generally agreed that man functions as an active agent through his mental mechanism; and the most comprehensive, because it takes into account every influence operating upon the group studied, which would in any way affect its psychic reactions.⁴

It is obvious that all of this rests upon definitions. All history, all human activity, *could* be defined as ultimately chemical; or as ultimately physio-psychological (as conceived by Dr. Alexis Carrel in MAN THE UNKNOWN); or even as ultimately a phase of of physics (as conceived by Henry Adams). It will be suggested in this article that, for the purposes of history and the social sciences, historical phenomena can best be classified as *both* economic *and* psychological—as the interaction between the two types of phenomena thus described. And it will be asked whether much is not lost by treating the two as essentially separate and opposed.

II

The tendency to employ the psychological interpretation of history as a reaction against the economic is perhaps best illustrated by a school of writers who have advanced an "idealistic" or "spiritual" interpretation of history, with the purpose of frankly and sharply combatting the economic theory as materialistic, or irreligious. This school does not regard the activities and "ideals" of the human mind as in any way interrelated with physical and

³"History and Psychology," in William F. Ogburn and Alexander Goldenweiser, editors, THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND THEIR INTERRELATIONS (1927).

⁴"Psychology and History," AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGY, October, 1919.

economic motives and activities. Rather, it regards "mental" or "spiritual" activities as essentially separate from, opposed to, and superior to the "material".

Paradoxically enough, the greatest factor in bringing on this "renaissance of idealism" in America was the first world war—a catastrophe which seemed to demand a reassurance, however forced and self-conscious, of the "rationality" of human affairs. Dean Shailer Mathews of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, for instance, wrote of his *SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY* (1917): "These lectures were written in the midst of the universal unrest resulting from a world war. They were an effort to reexamine the bases of an inherited confidence in spiritual values." Dean Mathews defined his interpretation thus:

The spiritual interpretation of history must be found in the discovery of spiritual forces cooperating with geographic and economic to produce a general tendency toward conditions which are truly personal. And these conditions will not be found in generalizations concerning metaphysical entities, but in the activities of worthful men finding self-expression in social relations for the ever more complete subjection of physical nature to human welfare.

Just what the writer meant by "spiritual forces" is difficult to distinguish. Clearly, however, these forces were regarded as operating largely through individual "great men". Mathews strongly criticised the economic interpretation of history, partly on the quite valid ground that it has, for many of its devotees, a religious character. This criticism is valid, however, only if one assumes that a religious attitude as such is illogical, which would seem to place Dean Mathews in a dilemma.

A number of other books should be noticed as examples of the "renaissance of American idealism", in the Wilsonian tradition, fostered by the first world war and protesting against "materialism" in historical interpretation. Two series of lectures, both, for some reason, at Stanford University, were admirable examples. Henry Osborn Taylor wrote of his *West Lectures*, delivered in 1920,

I spoke of the free action of the human mind through history, and tried to distinguish this agency from the grosser and more palpably determined factors shaping the fortunes of our

race. . . . I conceive progress, by which I mean the increase of human well-being, . . . to issue from the unfolding of the free energies of the human mind, empowered and sustained by the creative and loving mind of God.*

For a man of Henry Osborn Taylor's ability as philosopher and historian, the attempts to justify this thesis with scattering examples from history, philosophy, and science, seem, in retrospect, remarkable naïve, and almost a form of the pathetic fallacy of attributing purely human values to the non-human world. In 1918, Professor E. D. Adams of Stanford wrote his lectures on *THE POWER OF IDEALS IN AMERICAN HISTORY*. Adding his word of protest against the tendency toward "materialistic" interpretation, he set out to prove, by discussing the "ideals" of "Nationality", "Anti-slavery", "Manifest Destiny", "Religion", and "Democracy", that "there are other forces of an intellectual,—it may be a spiritual character".

Gustavus Myers's *HISTORY OF AMERICAN IDEALISM* (1925) came to the reverent and lofty conclusion that America had been peculiarly the home of the ideals of human liberty as opposed to the despotisms of the old world. And a number of recent books like *THE SOUL OF AMERICA* (1932) by Professor Arthur H. Quinn of the University of Pennsylvania have taken a poetic view of "the American Soul" that is incompatible with any disinterested study of it. Perhaps the most pretentious work on the history of ideals in America has been Albert Bushnell Hart's volume, *NATIONAL IDEALS HISTORICALLY TRACED* (1907), intended as a summary of the *AMERICAN NATION* series. This book, however, was very sketchy, and made no analysis of the real nature and the real importance in historical causation of the "ideals" discussed.

Only too obviously, most of this work has been done in the tradition of George Bancroft, who wrote American history with the idealistic interpretation, borrowed from Hegel who had applied it to Germany, that America was the noblest work of God, and the culmination of all the processes of the universe. This theological and moral interpretation was the sort of thinking which, in the nineteenth century, so discredited the whole field of the philosophy of history; and it set the tempo of an unrealistic interpretation of the nature of ideals as they affect history that has

**THE FREEDOM OF THE MIND IN HISTORY* (published 1924).

prevented any effective study of these phenomena. Almost all of the work that has been done in America on this subject has had two very serious faults. In the first place, it has been written with the idea that the conceiving of what are called "ideals" by a people is somehow a unique, awesome, and almost supernatural process, occurring without any causal relations with other processes that are basic motives in the individual and in society. Idealization is as important in every human society as are supply and demand. Its function is to render more beautiful, more acceptable, and hence more effective, the underlying and often unconscious motives and forces.

III

The second great fault of most American interpretation of the ideal forces is a tendency to reverse not only idealization in general, but the American manifestations of it in particular as a special, separate, spiritual entity. This is bad psychology and certainly worse history. It is a fallacious argument-to-reverence, similar to the old credo of the special inexhaustibility of American natural resources, and (before October 29, 1929) of the special infallibility of the American Captain of Industry. There is in it a naïve unawareness that idealization is not a peculiar characteristic of Americans or any other people, but is as much a characteristic of all the human species as are devout observances, covetousness, and lust.

An interesting example (though one free of the patriotic fallacy) of the tendency to treat ideas in their effect upon history as if they were psychological entities without relation to economic and other factors, was John Hopkins Denison's *EMOTIONAL CURRENTS IN AMERICAN HISTORY* (1932). Mr. Denison's recognition of the emotional character of ideas as they affect history made his work much less naïve than that, for instance, of E. D. Adams. He wrote,

I should like to define an idea as an emotionalized thought. The power of an idea depends upon the emotional charge it has accumulated. A mere intellectual formula has little effect on men. . . . The effect of a thought on history is usually proportional to the amount of emotion it can release.

But Denison then proceeded to make independent historical en-

tities of the "emotions", as did E. D. Adams of "ideals". He went so far as to make a sort of pseudo-science, almost a sort of astrology, of his psychological interpretation of history. He spoke of "progressive dynamos", "reactionary currents", "the liberty current", "that enchantress, the spirit of Commerce", *etc.*, as Lamprecht spoke of "diapasons" and the "*Zeitgeist*". Such "emotional currents" and "emotional storms" Denison treated as if they could be measured on a sort of weather-map of the whole country, by some sort of barometric calculation. In the last chapter of *EMOTIONAL CURRENTS IN AMERICAN HISTORY*, he summarized thus:

We have watched the weather conditions that prevailed over the whole continent, and have traced the great storms that have swept across the nation. We have watched how, from some area of low pressure, a whirlwind has started that has carried destruction far and wide, and we have seen great storms conjured up by some cloud-compelling Rainmaker. The West has hurled its tornadoes upon the North, carrying destruction in their wake.

Most "interpretations of history" have originated as matings between history and some other social or even some physical science. This method of cross-fertilization between knowledge fields can be highly productive, and necessary, because history cannot produce interpretation out of itself, by mere parthenogenesis. Consider as example Henry Adams's curious and premature attempt to treat history with the vocabulary of physics; or Oswald Spengler's analogies between history and biology; or Lewis Mumford's division of the history of technology into "eras" with names borrowed from geology, in his *TECHNICS AND CIVILIZATION*. Too often such unions between sciences are miscegenations, with results as sterile as mules: merely transferences of the peculiar vocabulary, methods, and viewpoints of one science to another field in which they have no validity at all. The result, in other words, is too often a crude analogy which may have some literary but no scientific value. Of such careless analogies, the one of Mr. Denison's between history and meteorology, just described, is certainly the most amusingly pseudo-scientific. A novelist like John Dos Passos may use it well enough for literary effect on the title page of *THE 42ND PARALLEL*; but it seems un-

fortunate that so valuable a scientific theory as the psychological interpretation of history may become should have been brought forth in this abortive and unscientific fashion. Mr. Denison's earlier book, *EMOTION AS THE BASIS OF CIVILIZATION* (1928), was almost as fantastic as Hegel's *PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY* in the bald manner in which it proceeded to an over-ambitious summary of all anthropology and history as special pleading for an entirely preconceived theory.

IV

Another type of writing which has influenced the beginnings of a psychological interpretation of history in America, and which had a considerable vogue during the decade of the nineteen-twenties, may be called "psychoanalytic biography". This was, of course, only one phase of the wide popularization of the ideas of the school of psychoanalysis largely associated with the work of the late Sigmund Freud. In its most popularized form, this idea was that history can be explained as the result of the "Freudian complexes" of great men. Gamaliel Bradford, and diverse imitators of Lytton Strachey, dabbled in this sort of writing, but perhaps the best example of the type was *THE AMERICAN MIND IN ACTION* (1924) by the popular writer Harvey O'Higgins, with the advice of E. H. Reede, and M. D. O'Higgins who, as Associate Chairman of George Creel's United States Committee on Public Information during the World War, had gained considerable practical knowledge of the importance of the psychological factors in society. In this book O'Higgins presented "analyses" of such Americans as Mark Twain, Lincoln, Emerson, Carnegie, Anthony Comstock, P. T. Barnum, Franklin, Longfellow, "Walt Whitman and Mark Hanna" (*sic*), "American Women", Julia Ward Howe, Margaret Fuller, etc. The analyses consisted of records of mother-and father-complexes, puritanical repressions, frustrations, and compensations. Mark Twain, for instance, conceived a father-antagonism in childhood, and was afflicted under the Calvinistic training of his mother with "a well-developed case of Puritan anxiety". Lincoln unconsciously regarded his country as the personification of his own mother. Emerson "wrote his philosophy, as it were, on a ouija board" out of his unconscious mind. Concerning Andrew Carnegie, O'Higgins maintained that

"qualities of mysticism, romanticism, and philanthropy are recognized by the new psychology as trends of suppressed sex".

The more moderate contentions of psychoanalytic biography have been strikingly reaffirmed by the newspaper correspondent John Gunther, in his *INSIDE EUROPE* (1936), in view of the rise of the "leader principle": "The fact may be an outrage to reason, but it cannot be denied: unresolved personal conflicts in the lives of various European politicians may contribute to the collapse of our civilization". Gunther's "psychoanalysis" of Adolph Hitler is especially striking. Harold D. Lasswell's *PSYCHOPATHOLOGY AND POLITICS* (1930) gives another glimpse into the possibilities of the subject. But the obvious impossibility of obtaining even the barest facts about the "complexes" of most historical characters, of calling them up out of the past as before a psychoanalyst, certainly limits the value of this approach to history. Still another consideration is the yet infantile character of psychoanalysis as a science. In an essay on "New Modes in Biography" in his *THE TEMPO OF MODERN LIFE* (1931) James Truslow Adams discussed Harry Elmer Barnes's claim (in *THE NEW HISTORY AND THE SOCIAL STUDIES*, 1925) that future biographers must be specialists in physiological chemistry and psychopathology; and the prophecy of Harold Nicholson (in his *DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH BIOGRAPHY*) that biography may become an exact science based on the endocrine glands. "If ever", Adams fumed, "half-baked knowledge paraded under the name of a science, it does so in psychoanalytic biography".

It is obvious that the types of writing discussed thus far have been too much influenced by popular and so inevitably unscientific demands. The scientific value of Freud's work, in particular, has been submerged and almost drowned in a wave of popularization, the reasons for which, naturally, were anything but scientific. As Mary M. Colum remarked,

the fantastic interest in sex which reached its apex in the 1920-1930 decade caused a sort of servile attachment to psychoanalysis, not because it threw any light on the working of the psyche, but because it seemed to provide an excuse or even a mandate for sex experimentation.*

Paradoxically, while one phase of popular wishful thinking in the

*"Life and Literature", *FORUM AND CENTURY*, January, 1937.

years since the World War, has demanded that a belief in "spiritual" forces as the cause of history be made intellectually respectable, another phase has demanded a literature to give an equal respectability to the subject of sex,—however pseudo-scientific and rationalized the methods to be used in either case.

The uses that have been made of modern psychoanalysis have been particularly unfortunate insofar as they discredit its usefulness to the interpretation of history. For its principles should be seen to be tremendous value to history, not as much in the study of the behavior of individual "great men", as the psychoanalytic biography school supposed, as in the study of the typical mental processes of vast numbers of individuals, the study of the formation and acceptance of ideas widespread enough to affect historical events. It will be recalled that the criticism made above of most work on the rôle of ideas and ideals in American history was that "ideals" were treated as abstract, psychological entities, existing, as it were, in a vacuum, and without relation to economic and other forces which affect history. This is based on a conception of thinking as an abstract, purely intellectual, process which most modern psychologists have long since given up, and which several modern psychological doctrines, particularly those of psychoanalysis, have striven to correct.

As early as 1918, the significance of Psychoanalysis for history was pointed out by Professor William F. Ogburn in his paper titled "The Psychological Basis for the Economic Interpretation of History". His contribution was to set forth

certain of the newly discovered mechanisms, the unconscious, the censor displacement, "repression", projection, compensation, the use of symbols, and rationalization, which have been developed by Freud, Jung, Ferenczi, Adler, Abraham Pfister, Bueler, Jones, Brill, Frink, and others, and to show the instincts function through them, and how these mechanisms offer an explanation of the social behavior called economic motivation.⁷

Modern psychology had discovered that the greater part of all human activity was devoted to various "escape mechanisms", and Professor Ogburn, in outlining certain types of these, pointed

⁷AMERICAN ECONOMIC REVIEW (Supplement), March, 1919. The paper was read before the American Economic Association in December, 1918.

out that this camouflaged activity of unconscious desires operated socially as well as individually.

These disguises which our motives assume are the central feature of this paper, because of the thesis that the economic motives of history are disguised. . . . The same mechanisms of conflict, censor and disguise operate in the repression and escape of collective selfishness as were discovered to be so prevalent in sexual behavior.

The mechanism of "displacement", for instance, operated in individual behavior as a sublimation of simple sexual exhibitionism into some higher form of public activity, as Freud maintained in his study of Leonardo da Vinci that elementary sexual curiosity was sublimated into scientific interest. Socially, the same phenomenon could be seen, for instance, in the displacement of economic motives by the profession of religious motives in the great religious wars. "Symbolism" Professor Ogburn believed to operate socially in such apotheoses as that of

the Constitution of the United States. . . . a symbol for the bulwark of our conservatives; and it is very probable that where economic motives were responsible for the reverence for this symbol, they will be so unconsciously.

Again, "projection", the attributing of one's own dominating characteristics to others, could be well illustrated by the fact that the most selfish employers were usually loudest in denouncing the selfishness of trade unions, and *vice versa*.

Professor Ogburn did not maintain, it should be noticed, that these mechanisms operated through any such thing as a "collective mind", as an abstract entity, or that any such entity existed. He believed that his idea was not an argument by the analogy between individual and social (like the fallacious attempts to apply the mechanisms of biochemistry to sociology) but simply a demonstration of how *exactly the same* psychological mechanisms operated in a *large number of individuals* in relation to their social environment. In a sense, Professor Ogburn would seem to have used word "economics" somewhat as the late Professor Freud was supposed to have used the word "sex", namely as a rough definition of the sum total of human unconscious behavior and motivation. This discrepancy may be cleared up somewhat by a

consideration of the variations on Freud's doctrine introduced by Alfred Adler, and C. G. Jung, both of whom felt that Freud had overemphasized the "sexual" aspect of the unconscious, and of repressions. Adler thought that the urge of self-assertion or superiority was more important than that of sex, and Jung's conception of unconscious motivation was the even broader one of a general will-to-live. All three agreed, however, that these fundamental, selfish motives were disguised.

For the purposes of social interpretation, the mechanisms discovered by psychoanalysis may be summarized best by the broad term, "rationalization", the idealization and beautification of public, as well as personal, motives; a term which defines a staggeringly large proportion of human psychological activity. Someone has defined it as "the finding of good reasons instead of real reasons". Francis Bradley, presumably in an interval between those moments "when my liver acts up badly",* once defined all metaphysical thought as "finding bad reasons for what we already believe on instinct". Here are the Divine Right of Kings, the White Man's Burden, Manifest Destiny, States' Rights *Lebensraum*, and a thousand others. While it might be an exaggeration to maintain that all ideas which are accepted on a wide and therefore an historical scale are of this character, it is obvious that most of them are. The entire public lives of most politicians and diplomats are devoted both consciously and unconsciously to furnishing the public with better rationalizations than the public can devise for itself. History is past rationalization.

Due to the peculiarly economic character of the history of the United States, and to the fact that the more baldly economic in character motives are, the more they need to be rationalized, the American field provides a better opportunity for the study of this phase of "historical psychology" than does any other field of history. The idealization of the issues of the Civil War, led by such minds as Calhoun's, into a struggle between purely abstract and legalistic doctrines, disguising the struggle between economic systems, is one example which ought to be more carefully analyzed. The rationalization of World War issues, led by

*"I am Francis Herbert Bradley:
When my liver acts up badly
I take refuge from the brute
In the blessed Absolute."

the mind of Wilson, is another instance that offers striking possibilities. In general, however, such a psychoanalytic approach to history has been seriously neglected by American historical research. The late James Harvey Robinson called attention to some phases of the method in his *MIND IN THE MAKING*. Charles A. Beard has made some implicit use of it in connection with his researches in the economic interpretation, but without stating it explicitly as a method. The chief difficulty seems to be that, like all "interpretations of history", it requires the historian to be familiar with material outside his own field of specialization. But since history has broadened its scope from past politics to include every economic, social, and cultural phase of the human past, it must face the responsibilities of its new domain. And the first of these is that it cannot adequately face the new subject matter if it remains equipped only with the old methods.

V

It may be noted that this article has treated the development of those ideas which form its subject, namely ideas about the nature of psychological forces in history, along the lines of the theory of the nature of historical "ideas" in general which the present writer believes to be the most accurate. It has been shown how the psychological interpretation of history, as itself an idea, has been used as a tool for the rationalization of some motive in the popular mind, as in the case of the deification of sex by popular Freudianism, or the justification of a belief in "spiritual forces" by the "idealistic" interpretation of history. The chief rôle of ideas in history, that is, of ideas widely enough accepted to effect history—their rôle of rationalization—is thus made doubly clear.

This, however, does not minimize the importance of the psychological aspect. War, for instance, is of all human phenomena one of the least explicable in "economic" terms. As James R. Mock and Cedric Larson remark in their *WORDS THAT WON THE WAR: THE STORY OF THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION* (1939), "Whether or not one accepts the interpretation of Charles Beard, the Nye Committee, Walter Millis, or someone else, it is clear that *ideas*, for whatever reasons they were held, took us into the War". Being probably the ugliest and most violent of all hu-

man actions, war requires the greatest degree of beautification and rationalization, and it is the working of such psychological, emotional mechanisms, with their *façades* of idealism, that really brings a nation to arms.

Compared to emotions disguised by ideas, the "economic" motives for war are trivial. And the same thing is probably true, to a lesser degree, in all the other phases of human activity. Certainly, by historians who pretend to be in touch with the movement of thought outside their cloisters, the psychological aspect of history cannot be much longer neglected.

by Robert Herridge

RIDERS OF THE STORM

The bright world turns like a flower, shrinks at night,
And all day's withered heads turn sadly again
To love's desperate theme. Beyond the mesh of seas,
Beyond the star pegs driven into the night,
We travel: who flourish in the years' whole show of pain.

Escape sea-ward builds no newer islands.
Nor is there any sleep dispelling shame,
That brings us morning through tropic shower of promise.
Take fire and sword: take words: take anything;
Be pilot: be pirate, and we are bled by time.

Death rears dungeons more actual than this.
And all our wished-for worlds go down;
The failure deep in the choked core of us all.
And love gropes through caves; uncharted falls,
And finds direction under the crooked stone.

To live—to gamble on a paradise—
Accept the tyranny, the lone heart's freeze.
Take voyage—this pilgrim to asserting dream:
Can any man dream such wild dreams
As finding actual Aprils in December seas?

by Gustav Davidson

ROADS, STARS, AFFIRMATIONS

Superior to all,
No longer subject, assailable,
Confident, the vision clear,
The pulses beating as they should,
All roads, orbits, meric ans
Extended to the widest latitudes of earth and sky,
The world clairvoyant, prime,
The future sweetly assured.

You beside me,
Your hand in mine,
Able alike, equipped and tested alike,
The courage of one fortifying that of the other,
Our purposes identical,
Our talents, ardors, persuasions complementary,
Minding not the belittling word,
The door shut in our faces,
Free, ambient as air, liberal, open-handed,
The winds auspicious,
Our destinies parallel, conjugate.

O thou, perfectly adored!
Delight beyond dimension!
O flame! O sovereign hunger!
O hourly miracle perpetually renewed!
O delicate fabric, device that has no fellow!
O innominable yielding!

*By the waters of Babylon, there
We sat down, yea, we wept.
If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand wither!*

Remembering other days, times gone under,
The going to school, the tender attachments of childhood,
Books under our arms, the golden walks of enchantment.

*Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O sea!*

Remembering things said in anger, counsel, and out of great affection,
The awareness and mystery of sex, the blush, the wonderment,
Plans, hopes, fears, the shaping of days, the shared confidences.

Be still, my heart, be still!
The pastures of delight
Are thine to browse at will.
Soon, too soon comes night
And the thaws that chill.

Youth's a fleeting hour
And love's a summer rose;
Taste the nectar, flower,
Drink till thine eyelids close
Ere the rose fade, the wine sour,
And the fragrance goes.

Remembering the innocent beliefs and the innocent unbeliefs,
The word unspoken and the word beyond recall,
Deaths, change, separation, drift, uprootings,
The standing alone.

"To die; to sleep. . . and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks. . ."
The fog suddenly lifted, a hand suddenly extended,
Help from an unknown quarter,
Work, advancement, rise in fortune,
New friends, commitments, a world abounding,
And out of multitudes, the tumult of faces,
Bodies, lips, eyes of desire,
Emergence of the one long sought, long awaited.

*Behold, thou art fair, my love,
Thou art fair!
There is no spot in thee!*

*If a white dove come to thy window,
Querida,
It is the soul of me.
Say to it divine things,
Bien de mi vida.*

Remembering far lands, wharves of departure,
The hurried leave-taking of friends, avowals, hand clasps,
The warning signals, the last shouted directions.
(Plagues escaped from, persecutions escaped from, possessions
left behind.)
Remembering islands passed in the night, the swing of Orion,
Final port, haven, the disembarking in a new country.

*And thou, America,
With thy wide geographies, manifold, different, distant,
Bounded by thee in one—one common orbic language,
One common indivisible destiny for All.*

At the appointed crossroads I found you,
Calm, anointed,
Awaiting my advent.
You from far places, multiple origins,
I equally complex, derivative,
The scent of deserts about you, the glitter of ranges,
Duitama, Porvenir, the red banks of the Magdalena,
Antioquia, Casanares, the fruit cargoes of Jiradot.
I trailing old affections, nostalgias, horizons below the equator,
You recalling the Indios of Boyacá, their harvest chanting:
Amapola, novia del campo, Amapola!
(To the thrumming of the *tiples*)
Or the christenings in the enamel blue sunlight of the patios of the
cities;
Or, amid wine and feasting, the homesickness for America,

Its bustle, crowds, purposefulness, civilization.
I with kindred longing for my own kind, and familiar bournes,
As watching Canopus ride over the peaks of Rapa
Or listening to the *himenes* on the coral shores of the Pacific.
These sharing now together and making indissoluble in our
 memories,
These forever consecrate and forever our own.

All things are possible, since you are possible.
All marvels, conquests, delights, phenomena, affirmations.
Shall we forge a new continent? Uncover Atlantis?
Shall we go forth and perform an eighth wonder of the world?

Who are they that say we are satellites, moons,
Swinging round the circumference of larger planets?
We are ourselves centres, hubs, centripetal,
Ablaze with our own fires.

Invincible now, intrepid,
The past, present, future confluent,
Stars, tides, magnetisms conspiring,
Our feet set firm on the ultimate foundations,
It is for us now to give laws, testaments, philosophies to others,
New ways, arts, rhythms, astronomies.

The past is prologue.
The things which are and the things which shall be hereafter
Pulse and flow around us in auroras of divine mirage
To farther and farther orbits, horizons, consequences.

Come!
We will mount up with wings as eagles,
We will run and not be weary,
We will serve our fellow man better than we serve ourselves,
We will share with him what we inaugurate,
Including all, loving and embracing all.

by Peter A. Carmichael

JEETER LESTER,
AGRARIAN PAR EXCELLENCE

IF the word "Agrarianism" has any apt and substantial meaning, evidently it must be one of the following:

- (a) A doctrine of hostility toward the city, holding that it is corrupt and unfit for human habitation.
- (b) A doctrine that some things about the city, though by no means all, are good, and that the prudent and happy life is one which is divided between city and country.
- (c) A doctrine that the land, and only the land, is the home of man, and that he should remain on it at all costs.

One arrives at these alternative meanings after reading the literature of the Agrarian movement and after proper regard for the etymology of its name. In the course of working through some of this literature, the impression frequently occurs that here indeed is an agraric or country style of writing, to say the least. The reader of the Agrarian manifesto so promisingly titled *I'LL TAKE MY STAND* is led by the title to expect to find firm grounds to stand on and strong, gifted men occupying them, in keeping with the traditional associations of that expressive declaration. It is indeed true that some few of the writers of that volume well answer to such an expectation, in the essays they contribute to it. All praise be theirs. But—shall we speak of the remaining parts? I will only say that the reading of the book does not persuade one that this is a *stand* or that it has really been *taken*; there is an error with respect to the true posture here, a posture which from the literary and ideological standpoints is not erect, but, one might say, sleepily horizontal. This must be all the more evident to those who stand, viably, for the South, since they know better grounds and talents for standing on them than most that we see in this anemic volume. The net impression which it gives,

in spite of some merits, is one of indirection, of intellectual insipidity, of innocents abroad.

Looking farther, one may discover a somewhat better pulse and blood count on the side of this new cause, though dangerous symptoms accompany them. It was my idea that Agrarianism had passed away, in consequence of the outcome of a public debate on it between an arch-apostle from Nashville and an editor of the VIRGINIA QUARTERLY REVIEW, in Richmond five or six years ago; which was about the same time as, and perhaps related to, the demise of the "new humanism" under identical circumstances, namely, the meeting of the late Irving Babbitt and Carl Van Doren in Carnegie Hall, amidst great intellectual excitement. But though quiescent from then on, the Agrarian movement had not been stilled. It seems to have acquired a journalistic organ called the AMERICAN REVIEW, since defunct, which I believe had doctrinal affiliations with the socialist and Roman Catholic movement in Great Britain known by the name of Distributism. In that REVIEW one will find remarkable proposals, some of which reek fascism and nazism, a shocking substitute for the pastoral view of life which we would naturally have supposed an authentic agrarianism to signify. Witness:

. . . let the national and state governments buy up [*confiscate?*] all the lands owned by the large planters who are struggling to save a portion of their lands, and give [*sic*] every landless tenant who can qualify, 80 acres of land [not just 40 as on a previous occasion not forgotten], build him a substantial hewn log house and barn, fence him off twenty acres for pasture, give him two mules and two milk cows and advance him \$300 for his living expenses for one year.

. . . Undrained, unterraced, single-cropped land, and lack of reforestation, should be *prima facie* evidence that that homesteader is not a responsible person, and his land should, after fair warning and action in Chancery Court, escheat to the state. As for those farmers and planters who acquire this by purchase or inheritance, a heavy suspended fine should be imposed upon them; and unless the planter or farmer remedies the abuses within a reasonable time or gives good reason why he has not been able to do so, the fine should be collected. The county agent and three men appointed by the state department of agriculture, should serve in each county as a kind of court to pass on such matters,

and appeal from their decision should be allowed to go to Chancery Court.

And a little farther on, the sardonic supererogation:

I am suggesting a modified form of feudal tenure . . .

Can this be a genuine countryman speaking? Are these the sentiments of the *bona fide* man of the soil? I don't believe it. They have the air and authority of pronouncements by a political fuehrer or an industrial tycoon. Men who plow and dig and chop, men who are dirt farmers rather than city agrophiles, don't talk that kind of language. Their way of life generates and necessitates a hard independence, the very opposite of this proposed bondage, and if it did not, I wonder what there would be in such a life that could hold them to it. Fancy suggests that if any soft-handed city witling showed up among them exuding vicarious poetic sentiments about the beauties of nature while, on the other hand, snorting kremlinesque theories about seizing their farms and putting owner and tenant under police surveillance, they would promptly and fittingly give him the country equivalent of the bum's rush, namely, a treatment of tar and feathers.

But let us look a little more closely at this extraordinary program of tyranny. What is the author really saying? What is the conception, the theoretic motivation, behind this threatening and uneasy language? As it is none that fits the pure rural habit of life, we must refer it to the city. One may observe indeed that Agrarianism as we have it is not a country movement at all (farmers everywhere yearn to move to town). No, this movement is centered in cities, especially the city of Nashville. Accordingly, so far as its adherents are themselves *bona fide* agrarians, and not literary zealots exploiting a theme, it must be assumed that they are motivated by an anti-city, back-to-the-land interest. They illustrate the version of Agrarianism suggested in the first of the three foregoing definitions.

Agrarianism in that sense is hardly a theory. Perhaps the idea of it might be phrased as an aphorism—so it has been, in the sayings of world-weary poets and other disappointed men. But the elemental and homely realizations of the race, such as the value of outdoor life, of tranquillity, of a stake of ground, and so forth, do not require laborious exposition under a big name

and in the guise of a theory (except in strained academic usage). It takes no persuasion to get a city man to see that the country has many enchanting features. Anyone who goes downtown in New York on Saturday afternoon finds the offices closed and the streets bare. Where has everybody gone? To the country or the seashore. Furthermore it is not just on Saturday that they clear out; they have many more holidays than other workers, and one reason they do is that they may go to the country more. The successful ones have homes out there, as do the successful in all cities. Among the reasons why they work in town is this, that they may be able to live (respectably, becomingly) in the country. One might say that people of this type are and always have been even better agrarians than those who spell it with a capital "a", so far as practicing their preaching is concerned, for they do live in the country while the others live in the city and only write innocuous pieces about the green pastures.

The city men of even greater success live in both places. They know as well as any paper Agrarian that for some purposes it is best to live on a country place, while for others one must have a house in town. They go still farther; they travel. They are Agrurbivagantes. Clearly they more than answer to the second of the possible conceptions of Agrarianism with which we began, the one holding that the topographical good life is a life divided between city and country.

But neither the class of citizens of the first Agrarian definition (who should evidently be dubbed the Urbiphobes, to conform with Agrarian ideology) nor those of the second (the Agrurbivagantes) would think of calling their way of life a philosophy. Less still would they suppose that if they did call it such and start writing books and articles on "I'll Take My Seat", "The Five Pillars of Sand", etc., the evils and sorrows of modern life would presently fade away. Those of the realistic persuasion, men and women of reflection and learning, would, if informed of Agrarianism in its more excited forms, come forward with tough rebuttals. For example: Are we to believe that human excellence has its locus in the country rather than the city? Are the inventions, the scientific discoveries, the art works, the systems of thought, which the race has chosen to preserve,—are these the products of city

or of country? Are persons who live on the dirt more worthy specimens of civilization, more gentle, more noble, more accomplished, more appreciative of nature, even, than those who live in the city? Socrates, twenty-five hundred years ago, was asked by the fascinated Phaedrus a certain question which brought forth an answer especially pat here. The two of them were out in the country, whither they had gone, at Phaedrus's bidding, for a recital of the treatise of Lysias. The scene was one of delectable memory. On the one hand fair pillowy meadows, on the other the nymph-haunted Ilissus. A plane tree shaded the spot where they reposed, and the air was sweet with fragrance of the *agnus castus*.

"Do you ever cross the river?" asked Phaedrus. "I rather think that you never venture outside the gates."

To which replied the wisest of men: "Very true, my good friend; and I hope that you will excuse me when you hear the reason, which is, that I am a lover of knowledge, and the men who dwell in the city are my teachers, and not the trees or the country."

II

If an Agrarian is an Urbiphobe and nothing more, then we have always had him among us, and in fact all of us are in some respects Urbiphobes. But in that case there is no reason for an Agrarian movement. To justify such a movement, one would need to justify also a movement calling upon us to eat and sleep, to live in houses, and to be bipeds.

If, secondly, Agrarianism means Agrurbivantism, then all of us agree to it, or rather aspire to it (since it takes money and leisure to be an Agrurbivant). Furthermore, we have always agreed to it. We do not therefore require anybody to persuade us to adopt such a view. What we sorely need, especially in the South, is the means by which to live in so desirable, and so desired, a style. The Agrarians fatuously propose that the way to attain that goal is to go back to the hoe and sickle, to train the spirit to be content with contemplating the clod, and even to embrace peasantry. In this they are extremely serious. Were they sardonic like Erskine Caldwell, whom they completely mis-

understand, or had they a relieving sense of humor like H. L. Mencken, another enigma to them, we might be able to listen to them with less sense of being lectured by a long-faced New England Puritan. It is little wonder that their net contribution toward the solution of the South's problems is far less than that of Southern chambers of commerce, which, if I may say so, is of a magnitude not easily discernible.

These criticisms are apposite, I admit, only if Agrarianism means either the compromise, half-way doctrine about living in town and wishing you did not or the one about spaciously living, if you can afford it, both in town and in the country. If Agrarianism on the other hand is a name for something distinct and genuine, really denoting what its etymology suggests, then that is a different matter. In that case it would be the type of theory indicated in the last of the three definitions at the head of this article. That would mean a simple, forthright, unconfused belief that the thing for us to do is to take for our ideal the man with hoe and pitchfork, with dirt under his fingernails and manure in his shoes.

Perhaps I still err, and ought not to take a literary word like "Agrarianism" to have a realistic denotation at all. But it is evidently that or nothing. One may also point out that the Agrarians either know or should know this is the case, since they are literary men and cannot be supposed to lack respect for words or acquaintance with semantics. It is all too clear that they could learn something about the dirt life and about what to others is known as rural sociology. Approaching their writings, I expected to meet a hardy set of gentry answering to a notion of what might be called *rural sociologue*. Having now completed the labor of reading the writings, I see that that was a misnomer. Theirs are the ideas of irritated city men, evidently composed for the literary market. They misapprehend the old Southern plantation, which was conducted in the style of an efficient business of today and which had its seat in an imposing mansion not wholly unlike, either in external appearance or in the life that went on inside, the large places we now see in Westchester County, for example. Further, these writers have not a true dirt-related conception of the farm, any more than of the plantation. They are blind to

the squalor, the pitiful complacency, the helplessness, the crude elementality; and we may surmise that they are strangers to matted hair, to the man-borne smell of ox and mule, to a fare of sow belly and molasses, to sloth, to recidivism, to the great temptation of the farm to inertia of every sort, and to a great many other facts of life at dirt level. The visions they have are book-begotten, visions of campestrial repose, of flowers and summer idyls, of far-off Arcadia, visions, we may prudently remind ourselves, which have always been illusions, howsoever delightful, of city living. With these memoranda in mind, I hasten to drop the name *rural sociologue*, which at first seemed appropriate for these crusaders. The true and proper name, it now appears, is *urban mystagogue*. That is to say, the Agrarian as we actually have him is certainly not an agrarian, but rather a polite salesman of mystical panaceas, having difficulty in making himself understood.

There is, God witness, no lack of *bona fide* agrarians. The picture and story of these poor casuals of the soil is not what we get by reading the pale language of nice young men of the city who mean well but see badly. No, it is a sight that is got by riding through the country almost anywhere in the Far South (as well as in some other parts), and noticing the habitations, the harrowed tenants thereof, the surrounding dilapidation, gaunt, unfed quadrupeds, venerable and excrementitious accumulations of decay, all sicklied over with consumptive gloom. This is not rare or remarkable, it is nearly the rule. This is the country long since abandoned to the hapless sharecroppers, by those who see realities. The sharecroppers are true dirt agrarians. They like the land, not knowing anything else, and they cling to it. The land is in them and is expressed through them. They are original, natural, total agrarians.

This class is now memorialized in the character who for five years has bestrid the American stage, and who in print has made himself known to nearly every literate citizen: Jeeter Lester. Meditating upon his people in many states, and upon the seductive preachments of his city kinfolds, the Agrarians, one is led to the conclusion that he who would understand the latter would be wise to get more closely acquainted with the former. As a

matter of fact, Jeeter is not just an exhibit of degeneracy, as the uncritical suppose; he is a man with ideas, tenaciously held, which go far beyond those of other croppers. These are the ideas underlying thorough, natural, unique agrarianism; unborrowed, uncalculated, and of the earth.

The show, *Tobacco Road*, is hardly ten minutes old before Jeeter gives his city-minded wife Ada to understand, in the earthy language of untutored agrarianism, that the city is no place for a man of the land. "City ways ain't God-given. It wasn't intended for a man with the smell of the land in him to live in a mill in Augusta." A moment later he exposes the kernel of agrarianism—the rest of the play is the natural effect of the working of this: "People that's born on the land should stay on the land. The Lord intended such." With Jeeter it is never a matter of personal preference nor of expediency, where the question concerns country versus city. Necessity, not choice, is the determiner, for the countryman; and it is a necessity ordained by God and approved by the agrarian.

Ada's interminable taunting; the tempting talk of the bank man about opportunities in the Augusta mills; the disappearance of most of Jeeter's family, and their disregard for him; the disintegration of everything before him,—none of this budges him in the slightest. There is not a bite to eat in the house, but to Jeeter, "That ain't got nothing to do with it." The bank man is about to take possession, through foreclosure, and offers to help Jeeter get a job in town. Jeeter's answer is, "by God and by Jesus, no!" But, says the banker, times have changed, and even if Jeeter did realize his one ambition of getting sufficient money to finance the year's crop, he still could not make enough out of it to live on. To which Jeeter: "I don't care. God made the land, but you don't see him building no durn cotton mills."

Much of what has been printed about Jeeter leads us to think of him as only a low, pathological reprobate. That is a gross misapprehension. He is perfectly willing, eager, and enthusiastic for work—agrarian work. "I is ready to look after my own... but that don't include no... mill." At plowing time he waxes ultra-agrarian in his sentiments. "I reckon it is the smell of that sedge smoke this time of year near about drives me crazy...

When the smell of that new earth turning over behind the plow strikes me, I get all weak and shaky. It's in my nature—burning broom sedge and plowing in the ground this time of year. I did it for near about fifty years, and my Pa and his Pa before him . . . The land has got a powerful hold on me . . .” Everybody born and raised on the farm, he naïvely supposes, ought to be stirred by the approach of planting time.

Toward the end, Ada, still yearning for an automobile and a place in town, appeals to any sense he may have of self-improvement. His answer is that he “ain’t aiming” to be better off. The land and the crop to him are everything.

The crisis arrives. Jeeter in desperation captures his runaway illegitimate daughter, intent on selling her back to her ox-like agrarian husband for \$2 a week. Frustrated by Ada, he gives up and talks about dying, saying he has got to die on the land, and nothing shall move him from it while he is alive. “Don’t you understand?” he pathetically asks of Ada.

Very soon comes the end. Jeeter has sprawled himself on the edge of his porch, a hand dangling to the ground. As the curtain comes down, his fingers feebly play in the dry dirt of the bare yard.

This paragon of the soil, this agromaniac, never let anything compromise his attachment. Working, vegetating, worshiping, were all natural and delightful to him. He went to the dogs not because of unwillingness to do his agricultural part, but because, as the bank man said, the times had changed and the land didn’t have a living for him. He never could have understood that. It seems his Agrarian kin of the cities can’t, either.

by William D. Hull, II

IN MEMORIAM

I

CATULLUS

flower of evil
rooted in a rotting rome

pure lyricist
vituperative ranter

possessor of something fine
haunter of the gutters

impetuous swallow
with wings
clipped

you wrote
odi et amo
to lesbia
and lesbia got more
elsewhere

by William D. Hull, II

II

VICTORIA

you wore
caps with prim little ties
you were
virtuous and very exacting

you loved a man once
had far too many children
and mourned interminably

you wrote volumes teeming with verys and sos
underlined

you liked beaconsfield
loathed gladstone
and said so

you went to jubilees
(three of them)

you were crowned empress of india
and edward thought you perennial

by William D. Hull, II

III

MAE WEST

mussolini said
she is what i want italian women to be

and america wasnt sure

she wiggled her way to fame
and all america drawled
come up and see me some time

and told jokes outside the drawing rooms

slither was the word for her

she wrote acted directed
and drew tops in salary

hollywood said she taught a sunday school class
and lived with her mother

of course she didnt smoke

she frightened respectable audiences
with her palpitatin python

she was blonde and rather fat

by William D. Hull, II

IV

MRS. F. D. R.

mrs roosevelt was very energetic

she wrote articles and books

she lectured

she frequently made statements

she christened dedicated and was present at
to say nothing of smiling

she came by it honestly

she shook hands with girl scouts
and women in reform schools

she traveled by plane
wore tailored suits with flowers
and had negroes to tea

mrs roosevelt was very energetic
she frequently made statements

by William D. Hull, II

V

BOSWELL

he knew dr johnson
and confessed it

dr johnson knew him
and was sometimes embarrassing

he drank tea
and wished he werent scotch

dr johnson didnt like it

he spent his life writing
about dr johnson

and people have to read it

you see he knew dr johnson

by William D. Hull, II

VI

GRIFFES

after debussy
you were in america
inchoate

you wrote clouds the fountain the white peacock

you were just beginning

they say that you would have been the greatest of the americans

that you had an original genius

you had a rare gift and knew how to use it

the flower fell
crushed
in the second cycle
beneath avid fingers

by Edward Podolsky

A PIONEER SOUTHERN SURGEON

EPHRAIM McDOWELL

ON the thirteenth of December, 1809, Dr. Ephraim McDowell of Danville, Kentucky, received a call to come at once to see a Mrs. Crawford, living in Green County, Kentucky, some sixty miles distant from Danville. After a hard journey on horseback, Dr. McDowell reached the Crawford household. Once arrived there, he found two local doctors in puzzled consultation. Mrs. Crawford presented a most unusual and puzzling problem. She was thought to have gone beyond her time in childbirth. Upon examination, Dr. McDowell found her to be suffering from pains very similar to labor pains. The two other doctors present, schooled in the uncertain sciences of the new country, thought that this was a very difficult case of labor which required more expert assistance than their own. But a rapid and thorough examination convinced Dr. McDowell that the womb was empty. Mrs. Crawford was not with child. She was suffering from an enormous growth arising from one of her ovaries. Ovarian tumors in those days were puzzling. Not much was known about them. Doctors were not very expert in diagnosing them. This lack of knowledge often produced tragic results.

Dr. McDowell recalled the case of the young unmarried daughter of a minister who had become the victim of one of these tumors. As time went on the tumors had grown as a living child within her womb. To all outward appearance this young, virtuous girl looked like one with child. Wagging tongues had told malicious lies that spread like wildfire through the sparsely settled community.

Scornful fingers pointed meaningly at her swollen abdomen.

"The minister's daughter is carrying a bastard."

"And her father preaches the gospel. Pious hypocrite!"

"She will not tell who the father is."

"She puts on airs, and she has the affrontery to tell us she is not with child!"

A confusion of evil tongues and thin, pinched faces. Talk, talk, talk. She knew she was the victim of some strange internal growth, but she could not convince the evil-minded. Louise took her own life, which had now become a burden too great to bear. Wise doctors then dared to cut open her abdomen, and discovered that she had been speaking the truth: She had never been with child. Growing from one of the ovaries was a tumor which gave all the appearance of her bearing a child. Louise's reputation was cleared, but Louise was dead.

These thoughts ran through the mind of Dr. McDowell as he concluded his examination of Mrs. Crawford. At length he told her that she was not pregnant: that, instead, there was a tumor growing from her left ovary.

"There is no medicine", he said, "which I can give you which will cause the tumor to recede even a little. From what I know of ovarian tumors this one will certainly continue to grow larger, perhaps with a fatal outcome. There is nothing in all the *materia medica* which can be of any help to you. The only relief you can hope for is from an operation to remove the tumors."

Ephraim McDowell was lost in a deep thought. He continued:

"But it is only right for me to tell you that I have never before removed such a tumor. Nor do I know of any doctor who has! If you are willing, and with the help of God, I shall undertake this operation."

Mrs. Crawford likewise was made of the stuff of pioneers: as heroic and courageous as the majority of the women of the wild Kentucky country of that period. Her eyes had seen much blood; her body had known much pain. She was accustomed to brave the dangers of the tomahawk and scalping knife. There was not even a tremor on her lips when she replied:

"Doctor I am ready for the operation."

To travel back to Danville was thought of and dismissed as unfeasible. Dr. McDowell sent for his nephew, Dr. James McDowell, to assist him in his first great adventure in abdominal surgery. Mrs. Crawford was placed on a table made of half logs, flat side uppermost. There was no donning of white, germ-free

gowns, no sterilization of rubber gloves and gleaming instruments. Ether and chloroform were unknown in 1809. McDowell was ready for the greatest bit of pioneering that the pioneering McDowells had ever undertaken. He was to undertake an operation that no man had ever dared think of before: to take the first great step of laying open the mysteries of the abdomen, of exposing the insides of the body to the healing steel of the surgeon's knife. He was to make Dr. Bell's dream come true at last.

Ephraim McDowell felt that this was the most solemn moment in his life. He knelt down and prayed: "Almighty God, be with me, I humbly beseech Thee, in this attendance in Thy holy hour; give me becoming awe in Thy presence, grant me Thy direction and aid, I beseech Thee, that in confessing I may be humble and truly penitent in prayer, serious and devout in praises, grateful and sincere, and in hearing Thy word attendance, and willing and desirous to be instrument. Direct me, O God, in performing this operation, for I am but an instrument in Thy hands, and am but Thy servant, and if it is Thy will, Oh spare this poor afflicted woman. Give me true faith in the atonement of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, or a love sufficient to procure Thy favor and blessing; that worshipping Thee in spirit and in truth thy services may be accepted through his all sufficient merit. Amen."

Dr. McDowell removed his coat and signalled for the stalwart men who had come to assist him in holding Mrs. Crawford's arms and legs. The knife bit into the abdomen, sweeping straight and sure for a distance of nine inches. As soon as the incision had been completed the intestines rushed through the open wound and upon the table, so great was the pressure of the tumor exerted.

The beginning of the adventure was indeed a gloomy one. He made an attempt to replace the protruding intestines, but without success. The news of his fearsome accident drifted outside the cabin, where a goodly crowd of rough Kentucky, skin-clad men had gathered. There was a beginning buzz of angry excitement.

"It looks bad for Jane Crawford. She should never have consented to this operation!"

"Is he God himself that he thinks that he can cut one's belly open and play with the innards?"

"Her guts are spilt on the table, and the woman-butcher is seeing the folly of his undertaking!"

"He is no honest doctor, but a butcher who loves the sight of blood!"

"McDowell will never live to see this day if Jane Crawford should die because of his bloody meddling."

"Get a rope ready! His neck will find a noose as soon as Jane dies! No woman-butcher will ever leave Green Country alive!"

"The rope is ready. Now let Butcher McDowell pray for God's help!"

The steadily increasing drone of angry muttering outside the cabin door reached McDowell's ears as he worked deftly amid gushing blood vessels in a gory and unfamiliar field. The tumor was removed, fifteen pounds of it! The intestines were carefully replaced. The wound was sewed and held together with strips of adhesive tape. Then clean dressings were applied and Mrs. Crawford was lifted from the rough table and put to bed. The operation had consumed twenty-five minutes.

Mrs. Crawford had not died on the operating table. She had lived through that awful bout of nerve-tearing pain. The rope for the pioneer surgeon was never used. Dr. McDowell saw the mob part to make a path for him as he went to mount his horse. The operation had been successfully performed. But would Mrs. Crawford live for any length of time? Five days later he visited her again and, much to his astonishment and gratification, he found her engaged in making up her bed. Mrs. Crawford, though pale and weary, was free from pain and able to perform her household duties. She was made of sturdy stuff. She recovered completely within a month and lived to the age of eighty, which would have been impossible had the tumor been allowed to grow within her. She was grateful for the relief the operation had brought her, even though she had to live through a nightmare of pain in its performance. Recently in Kentucky a statue was erected to the memory of this woman who helped to set her sex free from pain.

II

All the McDowells were pioneers. They laughed in the teeth of death as they pushed onward into new fields beyond the golden

sun. Blood and war steel and musket, many-masted ships that tossed fitfully on raging seas, red men and tomahawks, the cold cheerless winters of a home in the wilderness, these the McDowells knew.

Fiercest of all the clans besides the Campbells, fighting against the tightening oppression of the Stuarts, disease-maddened rulers of England, were the stalwart sons of Dowell. Borne of brave Dougal, the worthy son of Ronald, son of the immortal Somerlad, they had from time immemorial marched and fought under the clidberry bush, which in time became the symbol of their clan. They marshalled under the banner of the ancient laws of Lorn the hereditary chiefs of their race, and fought with great valor for their beloved Scotland. When the new lands beyond the sea known as America was being colonized a brave band of McDowells emigrated to the colony of Pennsylvania, where they settled in 1729. Ephraim McDowell, warrior of Boyne River and Londonderry, was already an elderly man when with his two sons, John and James, his daughters, Mary and Margaret, and a goodly number of kinsmen, he came to settle in the new, wild country. The McDowells remained in Pennsylvania but a few years. There John married Magdalena Wood, whose mother was a Campbell, of the tribe who had fought side by side with the McDowells in the old days. The Campbells, too, had come to America to seek new fortunes.

In Pennsylvania was born Samuel who was to become the father of Dr. Ephraim McDowell, founder of abdominal surgery and the greatest McDowell of them all. Samuel McDowell moved south where he settled in Rockbridge County, Virginia and where Ephraim was born November 11, 1771. For thirteen years the McDowells lived in Virginia but the urge to explore new territory again excited the McDowell blood. They pulled up stakes and moved to Danville, Kentucky, where they settled down. Danville was one of the outposts of the Boone Trace where life was harder and somewhat more uncertain than in the more élite northern colonies. But the McDowells seemed to thrive on hard life.

Ephraim spent his early years in a cabin built of felled logs. The floor was of rough logs split into planks: the roof of black slabs laid like shingles and held in place by a log for weight:

the windows made of paper rubbed with hog's lard to make them transparent. In summer, the climbing vine between the logs was removed to permit ventilation of a sort: in winter, the chinks were filled in again to keep out the bitter cold. Educational opportunities in the new country were as meager as the food and clothing yet young Ephraim McDowell received a smattering of classical learning at the seminary of Messrs. Worley and James. Because physicians were scarce in Kentucky, Ephraim determined to become one. But there were no medical schools anywhere in the Boone Trace. Usually one entered a doctor's office to read his books and examine patients with him. Young McDowell therefore went to Staunton, Virginia, where he entered the office of Dr. Humphrey with whom he remained for three years. Dr. Humphrey was a graduate of the University of Edinburgh, and this was responsible for Ephraim McDowell's overseas journey to Scotland to round out his medical studies.

The years 1793 and 1794 were spent in Edinburgh where he came in contact with John Bell who lectured on the diseases of woman. Dr. Bell was much disturbed about ovarian tumors, which started as a small growth from the ovaries, later developing to gigantic proportions. Death was then its inevitable outcome. No one had ever thought of attempting to remove such a growth: Dr. Bell himself shuddered at such a thought! But he did venture to predict that some day it would be possible to remove an ovarian tumor and save a woman's life.

In 1795 Dr. McDowell returned to Danville and entered at once into practice. He was both physician and surgeon to the hardy pioneers who settled in the vicinity of Danville. He might have practiced his profession for the remainder of his life as a backwoods doctor, like countless others remained unknown to fame. But fate and the pioneering McDowell spirit decreed otherwise. Though fate had thrust the same opportunity countless of times into the grasp of others, the old McDowell desire to venture into the great unknown moved Ephraim McDowell to make the best of this opportunity.

III

The fame of Ephraim McDowell grew, but his reputation suffered some weird twists. Like most pioneers in strange fields,

he had to contend not only with the prejudice even of his own colleagues, but also with the superstitious awe of the rough and ignorant woodfolk who were his neighbors.

Because of his operation on Mrs. Crawford, Dr. McDowell attained an ungodly renown among the negroes of the region. One afternoon, as he was walking home, he met face to face a negro of gigantic build in a solitary part of the woods. The negro looked at Dr. McDowell for a fleeting moment and took to his heels! The doctor ordered him to halt. The Negro obeyed, with fear contorting his every feature; his eyes staring wildly almost out of their sockets as he fell on his knees, and began to pray. Dr. McDowell waited until he was through.

"Why did you run away when you saw me?" he asked the quaking negro.

"Pray, have mercy, doctor! Folks say you go about cutting open white folks and killing them." Dr. McDowell tried to convince him that his assumption was entirely groundless; but he did not meet with much success. His reputation remained fearsome to these simple folk for a great many years.

The fame of Dr. McDowell as a surgeon had now thoroughly permeated the surrounding countrysides. 1813 he was called upon his second case of ovarian tumor: this on a negro woman slave. Negro women are particularly fertile soil for these rapidly growing and maiming tumors. Quite often more than tumor is found to complicate matters. Yet, in spite of his previous success, Dr. McDowell did not at once proceed to operate. He was always the true healer. He tried all non-surgical measures before he finally resorted to surgery. Patiently he treated the negro woman with mercury for a period of four months. There was only a slight abatement of the pain. The tumor was not affected in the slightest but grew more massive and entirely incapacitated its victim.

Dr. McDowell thought that an operation in this case was inadvisable. But the master of the negro slave had the greatest confidence in Ephraim McDowell's surgical skill. He implored him to operate. Dr. McDowell finally consented but the operation on this second case of ovarian tumor was more difficult than on Mrs. Crawford. There was a great loss of blood and the tumor was extracted with the greatest difficulty. The planks of the table were

red with blood. At the completion of the operation Dr. McDowell had a feeling that all had been in vain. He attended her for several anxious weeks. She recovered in a few months and was able to resume her hard life in the fields.

The pioneering of Dr. McDowell was bearing fruit. Both his ventures had been eminently successful. He was now respected as a surgeon of incomparable skill in removing these growths. His third call came in the summer of 1822. He made a horseback journey of several hundred miles into the middle of Tennessee to remove an ovarian tumor from Mrs. Overton, who lived near the Hermitage, the residence of General Andrew Jackson. Mrs. Overton was enormously obese and Dr. McDowell had to cut through many layers of fat before reaching the tumor. It was a very messy affair. There were no trained nurses in those days and the neighbors were pressed. On this occasion Dr. McDowell had as assistants a Mrs. Priestly and General Andrew Jackson who held the struggling, elephantine Mrs. Overton as best he could. (This was perhaps the only time that a future President of the United States had acted as an assistant at a surgical operation!) General Jackson was a pioneer and as a pioneer he appreciated the pioneering of Ephraim McDowell. He was certainly vividly impressed by McDowell's skill as a surgeon. After the operation had been concluded, he invited him to go to his home to remove a large tumor growing from the neck and shoulders of one of his men. Dr. McDowell removed the growth with a few deft strokes of the scalpel and with remarkably little pain to the patient. He had learned to work rapidly to spare as much pain as possible.

The news of McDowell's new surgical operation for removing ovarian tumors travelled slowly to the outside world in those days when newspapers were scarce and medical journals even scarcer. In 1817 Dr. McDowell published the results of his operation in a Philadelphia medical journal. It took two years for his work to be recognized outside of America. The first recognition came from Germany where in 1819 Dr. Chrysmar performed the operation with great success. In America the McDowell operation was performed in 1821 by Dr. Nathan Smith in New Haven with favorable results. Thus recognized by this medical leader, the founder of the American Association and other important medical

institutions in this country, others began to view McDowell's pioneer efforts with great interest. In New York, Dr. David L. Rogers, one of the metropolis's leading surgeons, also bestowed his approval. But the American surgeons who preached the gospel of McDowell more eloquently than all the others were the two brothers Atlee, John and Washington. They perfected the original McDowell operation making it popular among American surgeons. These were the brave pioneers in abdominal surgery, the men who made the first advances in the most important branch of the surgical art.

The operation of the Kentucky surgeon then began to attract the attention around the world. It was tried and found to be of merit. In England, Dr. John Lizars, leading surgeon of Edinburgh, McDowell's university home, performed the operation with life-saving results. In Manchester, Dr. Charles Clay; in London, Dr. Frederick Bird; in France, in Italy, and in other countries surgeons explored the dark mysteries of the human abdomen and exposed killing diseases to light and conquered. Ephraim McDowell, in spite of world-wide fame, remained the simple backwoods doctor all his life. His operations were performed not in hospitals but in the log cabins of his patients. His assistants were not the white gowned nurses and fellow surgeons, but the rough, simple folk of the Boone country.

IV

Ephraim McDowell died on the 20th day of June 1830, while still in his prime. After his death the homage paid this backwoods doctor was even greater than during his life. In 1879 a marble monument was erected to his memory in his native city of Danville. But the McDowell operation, which freed women from the terror of the growing tumor which crushed important internal organs as it grew, is the greatest monument to Ephraim McDowell, the pioneering surgeon of the Boone Trace, one of the greatest masters of the healing steel. Together with J. Marion Sims, his name is the greatest of the saviors of women. He had made the real beginnings in the surgical conquest of women's ailments. Other surgeons soon began to follow; they grew bolder and soon learned to remove the entire womb or both ovaries in diseases

where this warranted. In 1832 in the city of Pittsburg, Dr. Herman and Werberg successfully removed a cancer stricken womb. In 1843 Dr. Health further improved surgical technique, and a year later Dr. Charles Clay removed both ovaries and the entire womb through the abdomen but, though the patient recovered from the operation, she died on the fifteenth day. The mortality from operative work in those early days was discouragingly high. As the years went on, means of controlling the excessive bleeding were found and the operation became decidedly safer. Today it is performed many times without danger, and is one of the greatest accomplishments of the masters of the surgical steel.

by John W. Weems, Jr.

MARCH

Now Spring knits lace on elm tree boughs
And girds the lawn with jonquil chains.
Soon will the wild woods gleam with white
And dark pines don a spangled coat.

Flown north the mallards, north the frosts,
At home again the sweet birds sing.
The sun's glow warms the still cool cheek;
Sharp winds grow blunt and fitly die.

Now old blood stirs; but young blood surges—
Rushing youth's again unleashed.
Boys seek their girls and claim their kisses—
Life, how good it is to live!

by Arthur Kyle Davis, Jr.

ODYSSEUS '38

To W. W. B. (1897-1938)

"... the good die first,
And they whose hearts are dry as summer dust
Burn to the socket."—Wordsworth, THE EXCURSION.

"... Heartless things
Are done and said i'the world, and many worms
And beasts and men live on."—Shelley, ALASTOR.

Far-ranging, much-endured, experienced man
Comes quieter home than came the Ithacan.
Who knows if here in native earth you keep
An ever dawnless and unbreaking sleep
Or if, still scornful of your spirit's rest,
Gaily you ply your passion-driven quest?

Here was no haven for your living will,
Restive of quiet pastures, thirsting still
For alien wines and pleasures, striding far
To freer realms where the adventurous are.
You would not brook our trammels; only death
Restores you to us minus vivid breath,
Bidding you lie in this ancestral bed
Of homely earth, from which you living fled.

At Old Petropolis a fitting pause
For friendly recognition (here it was,
Our piping-time of splendor, spent too soon,
Never to know an echo toward our noon
Till now, your night, when I too late would say
Things left unsaid when you had life and day)—
On then to that necropolis that claims

A quiet slope above the citied James,
Where, long forgotten all he may have done,
Good parents welcome back a truant son.

Few were the friends, and bleak the winter air,
And little pomp or mummary was there;
But, spite of all your helpless ash could do,
A rector read the burial service through,
And spoke, for *nunc dimittis* to your dust,
The Tennysonian lines of hope and trust.
Some felt you there, but ashes make no sound,
And silently you sank into the ground,
Nestling at last in deep Virginia loam.
And all the roads you travelled brought you home.

Old friend, well known, well loved in those young years
Before the world had touched you with its tears—
The world that never broke your manhood, though
At last it brought your pitiful body low
And sent your ashes from heroics wild
Home in the tiny coffin of a child—
Old friend unseen so long, in this late rhyme
I live again our boyhood's flowering time.

Do you remember how you played the trick
At Arrington's commencement? How your quick
And clever mischief duped me, made me rise
Before my name was called to get the prize?
What laughter, and what shame! Now I, the fool,
Laugh, and regret our fighting after school.

And every Friday when we spent the night
At your house or at mine, oh what a flight
Of fancy hummed past midnight from our bed,
Of high romance and deathless heroes dead!
Yours was the finer art, but I caught fire
From your impassioned tales and tuned my lyre
To old Achilles or Arthurian story

Or stole Macaulay's lays of Roman glory.
You stirred me with your peasant lad of France
Who through a direful window of romance
"Alone but sword in hand" avenged the deed
Done to a sister by the "noble" breed.
Even now some trace of adolescent pain
And deep catharsis stirs the soul again.

Sports were not much your forte, and yet you led
If not by hand, by heart and brain instead
And—yes!—by tongue, for where you took part
There was not wanting much of talker's art,
And what you lacked of strength or speed of running
Your tongue and brain supplied with genial cunning,
Touching our sports with joyful play of mind
Or now with vaunting bombast of a kind
To irk proponents of the rigid game
Who, though they quelled you often, could not tame.

You were the friendly magnet that withdrew
Me from my native Sycamore, to crew
With High Street—you and "Fatty" Gill,
Whose only curves were those of diamond pill,
Lucus a non lucendo, very slim,
But what a pitcher's arm he had on him!
And there was "Bull" the Steer, great, overgrown,
And "Buzzard" Goodwyn, solemn, big of bone,
"Bilius" Talley, playful, queer of face,
Walter Buchanan, Scottish of mind and race,
Two Jacksons, Charlie, Monty, small but tough,
Burfort, Wadleigh, and other boys enough,
With triple tiny Joneses, sportsmen all,
And dexterous at various games of ball;
And bigger boys were heroes not unsung:
Homeric names like Pollard, Gill, and Young.
Our playing-field was rough and full of snags,
Our backlot field Elysian, "Back of Bragg's"
(Now urbanized, I fear). But is there one
Who since has known a finer field for fun?

Was yours the daring, yours the leadership
That moved eight striplings to an icy dip
In Old Town Creek in February, then back
The high and hazardous long trestle track
Across the river glistening through the ties,
Where slight misstep or train would jeopardize?

In springtime when the girls were in the park
We caracoled on bicycles for lark,
Flinging our shafts of adolescent wit
At one another, daring not to sit.
There young love-liking stirred and danced and sang,
Bringing its puzzling sweets and many a pang.
Though chivalry was strong, each knew the bliss
Of an occasional shyly-taken kiss.
Vaguely we scented mightier things ahead,
Ideal devotions, beauties brought to bed;
Confused of passion and purity, we played
And talked and laughed, told boyish jokes, and made
A bold pretense of worldly wisdom, of
Full knowledge of the deep excitement, love.
Thus happily we learned our a, b, c's
Suspecting little of the full disease.
But you, more venturesome, could you abstain
Long from the lore of this occult domain?
The potent puzzlement that lured us then
Lifts up the heart of youth, but feeds on men.

A wondrous strength there is in native earth
To touch the mind and heart to deeper worth,
Buoying the spirit, breathing on it power;
Good earth is need of every human flower.
Once Old Petropolis lent us its strength,
And lends it still to me in this verse length
Of comradely communion with your shade
Until I rise renewed, refreshed, remade,
Antaeus-like from recollection's ground—
In such communion, might undreamt is found—

And then I fancy, wistful, foolish-wise,
That you from prisoning earth might also rise.
Sudden I hear your lusty laughter ring,
Gay as of old, at thought of such a thing.

I do not know what roads you travelled by
From boyhood to the day you came to die,
What brand of air you breathed, or by what streams,
Shadowed or clear, you played your living dreams.
Did laughter-loving Bacchus lay his snare
For your young brightness, twining unaware
His sportive wreaths around your human head?
Did Aphrodite lure you to her bed?
I do not know, yet I bear witness strong
Yours was no spirit ruled of earthly wrong.
Some earth there was in your divinity,
And earthliness is plain for men to see;
Unseen and deep withdrawn from mortal view
Pulsed the strong spring of the essential you.
Insatiate of life and strong of heart,
You somehow served, not crushed, your God-like part.
Pilgrim of passion, quester of life and mirth,
Your soul was never conquered by this earth.

No pity moves me now for your clean ending.
You knew the gift of life was worth the spending;
And when your spendthrift art of youth was through,
A dénouement direct was good to you.
A glamorous pilgrimage you boldly chose,
Perpetual reprimand to lives of prose.
Let no dull moralist of meager view
Dare judge the poet soul that lived in you.
He may not know you as I grateful knew,
A human comrade brave and gay and true.
Whether where you are now you wake or sleep,
Something of you our living hearts will keep.

January, 1938. Petersburg, Virginia.

by Weller Beardsley Embler

TOWARD A MORE HUMANE EDUCATION IN THE HUMANITIES

*I had rather feel contrition than be
skillful in the definition thereof.*

—THOMAS À KEMPIS

ALTHOUGH ours is an age of intellectual and political strife, of economic disorder, and of scientific endeavor, thoughtful men are agreed that the study of humane letters is (albeit an impractical and perhaps too tender a discipline) still an important part of the American college student's education. These men have also observed the necessity of re-defining, in relation to our times, the aims and ends of the literary discipline. The following remarks do not pretend to be exhaustive. They are exploratory, and are presented as aids to reflection merely.

I

TOWARD A MORE HUMANE EDUCATION OF THE TEACHER

Original vs. Second-hand Thinking

Some time ago I observed that I had become institutionalized (that is, academized) in my thinking and in my acting; and the problem arose how to re-possess myself. There was only one answer: to have the courage to think for myself, to have faith in my own best thoughts. Whatever it may have been in the past, a university ought today to be a center of original thought. Teaching ought to be an art, however much it has been set up to be a system of rhetorical devices. It is hardly necessary to review the history of human thought to point out that all the great artists, scientists, and philosophers were first and foremost original thinkers. And two of the greatest, be it remembered, Socrates and Christ, were first of all teachers! But perhaps we do not want original thinkers

in education. Is education merely a system designed to present the ideas of others? Is it simply a clearing-house for the dis-embodied thoughts of dead men? It may have been these things in the past; it certainly ought not to be today. Villainy upon villainy surrounds us, and you will never teach, persuade, or convince the uneducated of the folly of war or the hatefulness of greed by teaching them the history of either. We never learn from the experience of others, especially if those others happened to live more than a decade ago.

The mere accumulation of information is not so important as the scientific method has taught us to suppose. As teachers, we may widen the range of our thinking through historical study; but it is certain that the cultivation of sweetness, of reason, and of the imagination is not achieved through the mere acquisition of facts and data. The unfathomable complexity of our civilization; the heart-breaking frustration of individuals brought to the brink of disintegration by the very nature of our industrial society; the dis-ordered, confused lives of human beings congregated in large cities; the wilful perversion of truth, and the wilful submergence of the reason and of the tender passions—all these things have not been ameliorated one scintilla by our ever-growing collections of miscellaneous information about the past and present—its ideologies, its neat and natty thought-systems, its theology, its literature, its economic theories. Depend upon it, we must order our individual feelings and thoughts creatively before we can order those of the outside world.

"Adherence to books," said Amos Bronson Alcott, "has been the cause and still continues, of perpetuating error among men, and that to an alarming extent. . . . They often impose the most irrational and absurd conclusions on the fearful understanding. It dare not doubt. Fear keeps it ignorant. Authority lifts her head and commands instant belief." Unhappily, the typical teacher does not trust his own ideas and is seldom an original thinker. He is a dealer in the ideas of others. True, the knowledge and understanding of authorities is, for a while, important and necessary; but there comes a time in every effective teacher's life when he must begin to think for himself. The idea of authority is becoming a very dangerous one. Most teachers are afraid to think for

themselves; they are content, indeed they are too often proud, to quote the opinions of others.

We cannot put all the blame for this state of affairs (and I am speaking, of course, of the Humanities) on the German scholarship of the nineteenth century. There is yet a more formidable force working against original, creative thought: the commonplace, although many times highly intelligent, mind. The commonplace mind, having found its way latterly into education, knows itself to be commonplace and "has the assurance", says Jose Ortega Y Gasset, "to proclaim the rights of the commonplace and to impose them wherever it will." This mind is acquisitive in the extreme; and in education such acquisitiveness finds satisfaction in the accumulation of information, data, facts. Capable of prodigious reading and study, this mind imposes on all who come near it a standard of excellence which is precisely the standard which Veblen ascribes to the most ordinary man in the street: labor (in this case with facts) for the sole purpose of creating a régime of status based upon the conspicuous waste of information and the conspicuous consumption of information. The best informed in such a society become by divine right its high priests.

This competition for learnedness requires teachers to spend that erstwhile much-prized academic leisure in a never-ending search for information. Like the accumulation of money, there is no end to this desire once it has gripped a teacher. Deplorably, as teachers, we have no time left for original thought. Of course, we like to think that in a few years we shall have *learned it all*; that, having learned everything about our subject we can then devote the rest of our lives to enjoying the fruits of our labor; that, perhaps, we may, in some mythical future, be in a position to apply original thought to such contemporary problems as are forced upon our attention. But he who is caught up in the feverish race for knowledge is never content with what he has accumulated. The time for original thinking never comes, or, if it does, like the man who has made his hundredth million, he is too worn out to enjoy it. If your standard of values is the accumulation of knowledge for its own informative sake, you will die without having explored the nearest places of your own mind. The teacher in higher education lives on the ragged edge of life when he ought to

live from the center. His exhaustive reading and study (in competition with all the other harried teachers) warps his spirit and deflects his perspective. He knows that his worth as a teacher is measured by the extent of his learning, not by the width of his tolerance, the depths of his humility, or the breadth of his character. To the end of understanding humanity, of living a good life, facts for their own inhuman sake are as valueless as they always were. And the artist as teacher is employed to act as a corrective to the commonplace mind which puts all its emphasis on the value of information.

Toward the conclusion of the sixteenth century Michel de Montaigne felt called upon to say: "There are more books on books than on any other subject: we do nothing but *gloss each other*. Commentators swarm on all sides: of authors there is a great dearth." I do not know how badly sixteenth-century France needed authors, that is, authors, as Sainte-Beuve described them, who "really add to the treasure of human knowledge." The Renaissance had spent its best, and, as after every great age, only the scholarly commentators remained. But I am sure that we have a very pressing need for authors in our day. And since I am speaking of the ancient and noble appointment of teaching, we have today a very great need for *authors* in the teaching profession. Why do the best of contemporary artists and thinkers who are original thinkers, that is, authors, in daily converse with the problems that daily beset men in our contemporary world, why do they look with disdain upon the academic attitude? The reason is even as I have said: teachers still dally with such fiddle-faddle as commentaries upon commentaries, still mouth the words of some indifferent, antique critic, still insist that their "extended obituaries" are important; and all this while Rome burns. Must this be so, just at the time when education must either mean everything or nothing? In the world as we see it today, and I need not describe it further, we look to education to preserve the best that is in man; and it is a sorry system that shuns so noble a task, preferring instead the personal pleasures of the cubicle.

To be sure, I am not so foolish as to suppose that a teacher does not need, once he has finished undergraduate training, ever again to study. But I believe that all study should be to the end of

original thinking. The importance of intellectual and emotional discipline is sufficiently obvious as not to need apology; study is of incalculable importance; study is a major experience of life. But this study, this discipline, can be achieved with effectiveness only if the aim and end in view is original thought—thinking by and for oneself.

The mere accumulation of knowledge is never satisfying in itself, at any one time or over a period of years. The accumulation of learning is endless and transitory. One lifetime, a hundred lifetimes, is not enough with which to accumulate all that has been thought or said or done, good and bad, in the world. A person never catches up with any knowledge but his own; yet what is more satisfying than self-discovered knowledge? Man is a portion of the eternal; Man is the miracle; he is the past and the present and the future. To explore himself, to know himself—that is the significant exercise. When I have learned to think for myself, other men's thoughts are of inspirational value only; to study the thoughts of other men for a lifetime is to give over my intellectual and spiritual birthright. But to follow the changes of one's own sensitive and honest heart requires only one life; and this personal knowledge is at all times the reality and the truth. The life of a second-hand dealer is a miserable life, marketing always second-hand furniture of the mind, frowzy, dusty, worn, faded, and lifeless. The world would have no thinkers at all if students aspired to emulate the majority of their teachers. To be sure, one ought to read philosophy, poetry, drama, fiction; and one ought to read widely, but he should read to the end that he may develop his taste, his understanding, his sensibility; he should read for his own personal pleasure; he should read that he may be stimulated to a moral or a creative act; that he may have original thoughts. And an original thought is nothing more nor less than a fresh and living and personal aspect of an old truth. Books should supplement and vitalize the life processes. One does not learn all he knows from books or from the laboratory, as most teachers suppose. Life in the kitchen and in the street, Nature in the garden and in the fields, if we are to believe the poets at all, can tell us more than the sages can. The teacher should be an authority on himself. He should be an exceptional *man* and *thinker*. His first concern is

not the book but the man. His should be a comprehensive view of life, which view he can arrive at only by daily, personal contact with life itself, and through constructive thinking for himself¹. As I see it, the teacher has, today, a single duty to his profession: the development *in himself* of what Matthew Arnold so appropriately called *sweet reasonableness*.

II

TOWARD A MORE HUMANE EDUCATION OF THE STUDENT

The Historical Sense; Its Dangers

While we analyze the past, the present goes its own crazy way. We assume, for some antique nineteenth-century reason or another, that we must develop in the student the historical sense, which is an acute sense of time and quantity, as distinguished, let us say, from the Greek sense of space and quality. We teach the student to order the past according to some pattern: chronological, ideological, sociological. As human beings greedy for more than our share, as human beings at war with each other, as human beings seeking political preferment, as human beings in love, in search of perfection, or simply as neighbors over the back fence, the method has gained us little. True, our highly-developed sense of time is an attitude not easily cured. We have lived too long in the past and in the future to cast off the time-sense directly. Nor does it matter what is responsible for this attitude: Christianity, Democracy, industry, growth in population, and the variety of other causes. What matters is that it should not persist. We need to analyze the situation no further. We need rather to act with the present in mind. The living moment is reality. Someone has said that we never learn from the experience of others. It is too sadly true. The historical perspective has nothing to do with understanding, tolerance, taste, or refined emotions. Indeed, history has taught too many people that the way to worldly success is through deceiving the courts, joining the jingoists, cheating and preventing justice.

¹Was it John Jay Chapman who said that part of the preparation of a teacher should be at least two year's work in the industrial world? Whoever said it, the training might be quite effective.

That Socrates was put to death during the dis-integration of the Greek state is, unhappily, of no contemporary significance to the average American college freshman. But I have a touching faith in the value to the average American college student of the wisdom of Socrates—that is, if properly taught. The second-hand thinker will know ancient history. The first-hand thinker will know Socrates and how to re-state his philosophy for use in our times.

Now I am one of the first to agree, apropos this matter of the over-developed time-sense, that the man in the street suffers from too much contemporaneity. But observe that his is a contemporaneity of the emotions, of the appetites. In other words, as always, the un-cultivated man has no sense of values, no far-reaching judgment. And this, as always, is deplorable, becoming the work of education to improve. And of course education must ameliorate such conditions by using as method the idea of tradition. But the accumulation of facts known as history is one thing; the exposition of the “usable past” is quite another. One of the most cultivating instruments in education is the past, but I think the *best* of the past; the past purged of its errors. We should teach Shakespeare, and Milton, and Wordsworth for their excellencies, for their words as living symbols of the good life, not as the poetic result of the defeat of the Spanish Armada, or the Puritan Commonwealth, or the French Revolution. Why do we look with a fond nostalgia upon the “good old days”? Because in our memories we have purged the past of her horrors and miseries and clung only to the better picture. You will never teach young men not to smash the bakeries because people smashed them in 1793. But you may, with the help of Wordsworth, inspire in the student, howsoever little, the difference between destructive passions and creative logic. You may. If you teach Wordsworth as an entity hovering somewhere around the turn of the eighteenth century, a mirror, not a man, reflecting a segment of the past, you will *inform* the student, you will not *cultivate* him. I like to think that I teach Wordsworth as a human being who created a usable past, an ever-living past, a past un-distinguished from the now.

Since the turn of the century we have been hard at work confusing ourselves with the ideologies of the nineteenth century. And dozens of new dialectical monstrosities have been added to the

chaos. Daily, the historically minded, the analytically minded, the time-obsessed, the pattern thinkers are analyzing, charting, outlining history in a multitude of fashions, each a perfect design, no two alike. We have pigeon-holed the ages, we have graphed the rise and fall of empires. Up to the day before yesterday, everything fits nicely into its place, according to one theory or another. We have read Hegel, Marx, Spengler, Taine, and all the others too numerous to mention. Each dialectic is scientifically worked out. The stars have kept the right course, and men have acted—well, as they have acted; and men have thought—well, as they have thought. We know the past thoroughly, every hidden nook and cranny of it. There exists no secret, no mystery; it is as a book, and we understand it. To what avail? What about today or last night? Yes, we even know tomorrow, and what we shall do—where we can build, whom we can cheat, how we shall fight. But to the end of a good life, what about today? the living moment? How shall we act in this new circumstance? this new emotional situation? Necessity has reared its ugly head, Protean Necessity it is called by the dialecticians. Do we run to the history books? Do we make haste to the library? All the dialectics since man discovered he could invent them are of no value if you are consumed with greed, with a desire for power, with a frustration born of an industrial civilization. I say it is time to put our energy to something other than this hysterical, historical analysis. (Says a character in Mr. J. B. Priestley's play, *Time and the Conways*: "You know, I believe half our trouble now is because we think Time's ticking our lives away. That's why we snatch and grab and hurt each other.") Our pre-occupation with the past, our highly developed sense of time should be checked; it needs a corrective extreme to bring back a balance of sanity. It is a perspective wrenched out of its human and daily context.

In other words, all the past theories of history have got us nowhere. There are still rumors of wars; still poverty, still prejudice—all the information of the past, fantastic in its quantity, has not washed away one spot of these evils. We are proud of our sense of time that makes us look backwards and forwards with an appraising eye; we are proud of our intellectualism which makes neat patterns out of the experiences of mankind. But all

the pretty theories, be they as scientific as you please, have not contributed one ounce, at least if we may judge by our actions this moment, toward a better understanding of the facts of moral experience. If we have developed morally, we have the poets to thank and not the intellectual pattern-makers.

Teaching is like any work of art; it requires selection. In dealing with the past, as most teaching in the humanities does, like any work of art based on the past, teaching requires a selection of materials to be re-worked or re-stated in terms of the present. The teacher, like the artist, should stress the materials he has selected according to his own peculiarly-colored personality; he should stress them according to a comprehensive view of life (which ought to be his), and he should stress them according to the life of his own times. If you do not make of the past a living fabric, you are at best giving your students only information, and this for the average student of humane letters is worthless. The teacher ought to use the past, tradition, not analytically but synthetically. The best of the past is the instrument with which to refine the affections, cultivate and educate the emotions, develop the reason, and stimulate the imagination. You will remember what Milton said about a good book: it "is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life." The past is not a medal snug in some teacher's cabinet of curios!

Literature and Life

It has been obvious for a long time that the liberal education for its own sake is a philosophy of culture of a remote and amiable past. (That fact, incidentally, is not so distressing a one as many would make it out to be.) We now know that knowledge for its own sake, regardless of utility, is as antique a notion as the one that woman's place is in the home, or that if you are honest and work hard you will make your fortune. It is a fact, surely, that the prospective college student, the parent, the man of the world—all thoroughly believe that a college education exists for the purpose of preparing fortunate young men and women to do this world's more desirable and easier work, and at the same time to make for oneself a living more agreeable than his who has not a college education. Yet with all this so transparently obvious, with the conditions of our times so completely in accord, the individual

teacher of the humanities, however much he may know of newspaper politics, of prices current, of wars and Constitutional rights—however much he may think he knows of the outside world, he still teaches daily in the class-room the ideal of knowledge for its own sake; deep in his being lies the ancient distinction between life in the text book and life in the street, a philosophy supposedly annihilated long ago by such figures as Huxley and Spencer. No wonder, then, the bewilderment apparent in every liberal arts college in the country—especially in the graduate schools. There is still a good deal of worship at the ivory-tower shrine of learning. The undergraduate still feels (and is taught to feel) something sacred about the person of the learned man—the man of prodigious information. But the undergraduate has considerably more feeling about the affairs of the outside world, and he commonly separates the two, as he has been persuaded to do for a thousand years. As a result, he continues to put book-learning and class-room study in one category, a necessary evil, a small portion of his life sacrificed to appease the angry gods of education; while in the other category is the world of men, the life that really matters, the significant fight. This divorce between literature and life, characteristic of universities of the past and persisting today as habit, is a fracture which no responsible man can endure. Indeed, the teacher himself realizes more than a little the futility of his job, precisely because he has no tradition at his command with which to reconcile those ancient enemies, the cloister and the market-place. But if he looks about him, he will see that the two must be reconciled if education in our times is to mean anything at all. College training as it is today has been so democratized and leveled, of necessity in accordance with our times, that it must aim to educate the untaught many rather than the chosen few; and in so doing it must adjust its aims to make possible and popular a harmony between intellectual and emotional discipline and the problems of the street. It is unthinkable that students should run the course of their college careers and come home at the end the moral and intellectual boors they started; yet too many of them do. If they have learned tolerance, and sympathy; if they have a better understanding of life, and have grown, if only a little, to love liberty—if they have matured spiritually, more often than not the social life of the campus, or of

the fraternity, or the influence of a single poet-teacher, or all of these, has been responsible. The guerdons of the university are still meted out to those who memorize easily.

I am not wise enough to say how, specifically, a college English teacher can more effectively relate literature to life. But the work, as I understand it, is still the work of the humane scholar and the gentleman. Teaching is also, as I have said, an art. And like the artist, the would-be teacher should study humanity—Unamuno's man of flesh and bone. Hence it follows that to be a good teacher one must himself have the humane spirit.

We are not to look to those pedants who think of books only as tools with which to make more books for help in the task of more obviously relating literature to life. If we do, it will continue to prevail, as Ludwig Lewisohn says, "that the average American business man, the average American professional man, desires the books and magazines of his leisure hours to be either as frankly unrelated to life as vaudeville or baseball, or else to illustrate the excellence and righteousness of his moral theory and his political practice."

Why, indeed, are they *humane* letters if they are only bloodless repositories of archaeological, anthropologic, economic, historic, sociologic data, amenable to scholarly exploitation? Literature, as taught to undergraduates, ought to be brought somehow closer to their every-day experiences, their daily human experiences, to their hourly feelings, thoughts, opinions. Said Stevenson, "Books are good enough in their own way, but they are a mighty bloodless substitute for life." True. They are not substitutes, they are reinforcements supporting life, enhancing the values of life.

In that justly famous book, *The Revolt of the Masses*, Jose Ortega Y Gasset promulgates a philosophy of history which is at first sight a melancholy one; but all philosophies of history are melancholy. This one, however, has the advantage of being of the future. I wish to examine it for a moment, however cursorily. History, says Ortega, is the daily plebiscite of the people; that is, public opinion crystallized. "Public opinion is the basic force which produces the phenomenon of rule in human societies." On one occasion in the past, which is familiar to everyone, history was made by the inroads of barbarians from the North upon Roman civilization. The public opinion of these barbaric peoples, direct

action and violent, was centered upon the conquest of Rome. Their aboriginal relations with nature made them strong, and it was not difficult for them to destroy a great civilization already grown weak and soft. Now, there were many reasons, well known, for the weakness and the disintegration of the Roman Empire. And it is not difficult to point out the causes of the weakness and the disintegration of civilized society today.

The mass man is our contemporary barbarian. He is what Ortega calls the vertical barbarian; that is, one growing up in our midst rather than coming in from the outside. Observe for proof the statistical fact of which the Spanish philosopher makes considerable use: "From the time European history begins in the VIth century up to the year 1800—that is, through the course of twelve centuries—Europe does not succeed in reaching a total population greater than 180 million inhabitants. Now, from 1800 to 1914—little more than a century—the population of Europe mounts from 180 to 460 millions!" This means, among other things, that our civilized society, after its indifferent fashion, finds it impossible to assimilate the hordes of people who are born into so complex a civilization. This mass man is not educated; he goes through no refining process; he remains primitive; and what is worse, primitive in the midst of a complex civilization. He appears through the trap-door, as it were; and like all untrained savages, he believes only in direct action; his mind is sealed because it has known no cultivating process; and he runs amuck. His direct action is inevitably violence. "They" [the masses], says Ortega, "have been given tools for an interior form of existence, but no feeling for their great historic duties; they have been hurriedly inoculated with the pride and power of modern instruments, but not with their spirit, and the new generations are getting ready to take over command of the world as if the world were a paradise without trace of former footsteps, without traditional and highly complex problems."

Some men, when they understand these things, shut themselves up in an ivory tower—or in their libraries—and either sigh for the lovely past or proceed further to analyze it. If they are intellectualists, they point out certain logical derivatives of the situation, or they describe the logical causes and speculate on the probable effects, or they focus their thought upon some one section

of history and proceed to describe it exhaustively. But as I see it, description and analysis are of little avail. If history is the daily plebiscite of the people, public opinion crystallized, then of course the aim of the educator should be so to cultivate the emotions and understanding of the mass man, that his contribution to public opinion may be a thoughtful one and a moral one. Idealistic as I may be, I like to believe that the highest thoughts of the most humane thinkers, the writings of the poets, are the best instruments available for the refining of the affections, the sentiments, and the understanding. I like to think that an association with literature will so refine the mass man that he may become properly acclimated to our times, yet lose none of his strength, rather add that strength to the civilization of which he becomes a part. Nor should it be the aim to submerge him within the group. It is not an ideal of human letters to force the individual into a mold, rather it is the ideal to bring out that uniqueness, that personality, which is a basic law of human life, and at the same time to stimulate in the individual a respect for the same freedom in others.

Speaking of modern education, a professor of Economics expresses an opinion characteristic of altogether too many professors today: "If there is confusion in our present situation, there is also unparalleled promise. In place of the metaphysical orientation of the classical academy, the theological orientation of the medieval university, and the literary orientation of the Renaissance university, modern higher education must put its main emphasis on the method of science." This is the approach of the dialectician, the thinker with the acute sense of time. This, I am afraid, is all too often the synthesis of the man who regrets that he cannot force life into a test tube, or picture it whole in the abrupt angles of a graph.

Indeed, if ever man needed a unity he needs it today. Henry Adams and Oswald Spengler have all too well described the historical situation into which the twentieth century delivered itself. And all glory to those who seek honestly and fearlessly an order, an orientation—provided, and of course my provision is really my synthesis, provided he begins with the human, with humanity. Poetry, the best thoughts of the most sensitive men, poetry is the

instrument and the method; for poetry begins and ends in humanity—it is the humane spirit.

Into what larger synthesis can I integrate my human experiences? What about my grief of today? What about my simple wishes which are thwarted on every hand? Can I relate the economic disorder of today, which has injured my foolish pride, to some larger, more universal pattern? Does my domestic life, my daily behavior and the daily behavior of others toward me, the sorrows of those close to me, the compassion of my friends—do these characters fit into some larger sentence, the beginning and end of which I know not? What is the unity which will absorb my human experiences? Theology? Once, in the past, it lived and flowered in positive relationship with the daily experiences of men; but when its orderliness is questioned, it becomes either an institution without vitality or a gesture without meaning. Metaphysics? Metaphysics is equally unrelated to practical conduct. There was a metaphysic for yesterday, another for today, and there will be still another for tomorrow. The Greeks may have enjoyed a metaphysical unity; we cannot endure the thought. Science? Ah, yes! We have read that Science is the unifying force of our times. Into the scientific pattern we are to fit the sneers of selfish men, the love of parent for his child. This is so widely accepted a solution that I must for the moment examine it, however superficially.

Man (and great credit to him!) will find a way out of his pressing physical problems. Give him a material obstacle and he will find a way, if it pleases him to do so, to either remove or surmount the obstacle. Man, given an orderly universe, has invented science to help him solve his mechanical problems; and civilization has presented him with a good many in the past five hundred years. It is all very well; I am one of the first to praise the comforts of an ocean liner, one of the first to marvel at the startling ingenuity of astronomical mathematics. But Science can never serve as a satisfactory orientation, nor can it by itself educate the mass man; for it does not touch his humane consciousness. In fact, it does quite the opposite. For Science (and I am not speaking of the pseudo-sciences) enjoys little relationship with practical conduct, with the daily living of human beings.

It travels a roundabout and devious route, losing what moral energy it has by the way, becoming finally a "thing" ordinary enough for practical daily consumption—an electric-light switch, a hospital, sanitary plumbing.

But the human! That is timeless, universal, and central. It is at once the center and the circumference, the outer and the inner; there is no fragment of man's experience that is not a part of it, fitting somewhere deftly into the whole design. Once more we need faith in the essential divinity of man, faith that man is a reasonable individual, a developing personality (capable of sweetness), *and* an integral part, not self-existent, of all that surrounds him.

It occurs to me, then, that instruction in the Humanities is, as it has always been, a noble and an honorable appointment—instruction, that is, which is thoroughly familiar with the spiritual problems of our times, and which adapts its aims and methods accordingly. I fervently hope that the Humanities may achieve to a higher place in the educational program of our universities. For the Humanities, if they are humane, may be the best materials with which to build a unified structure of life—that is, a world the center of which is man and his every human experience, some to be deplored and detested, others to be fostered and developed. Literature is our Olympian Mount, affording a god-like perspective; it is the elliptical vision that sees the sum of humanity in the individual. The teacher who can relate meaningfully, morally, the literature he teaches to the life the student lives is himself an artist, a poet (not a critic), helping to create an order which has for its basic fabric the all-embracing human. Sweet reasonableness, if that is the aim of man, will germinate in no other soil; and it should be cultivated to flower everywhere.

by *L. Robert Lind*

THE CRISIS IN LITERATURE

V—PROPHECIES AND PROPHETS

PROPHECY is a treacherous and thankless pursuit. Many are the traps it lays for the unwary; even its triumphs are accorded little more than silence, while its failures constantly evoke the Biblical adage. Especially is this true in literature, where prophecy, in spite of its small repute, has continued to flourish. Each year sees a small harvest of mingled prognostication and lament about the state of letters; hardly a month goes by without its share of essays concerning the literature of the future. The value of such gratuitous vaticination bears a direct ratio, however, to the understanding which the writer who utters it can show of literature and its tendencies at the present time, for all reasonable prophecy takes its cue from the existing situation and attempts to divine how movements now nascent will develop or how the literature of the future may avoid the errors revealed by its present form.

English literary critics have been particularly active in the man-tic arts; indeed, they have so good an opinion of their skill that they have produced an entire series of prophecies of every imaginable description in the small volumes of the "Today and Tomorrow Series". Here, with much wit and flippancy (but also, let it be said, with much owlsh dullness), they have set forth their views on the future of art and letters. Each of these tiny volumes is designed to give space for only a few brief observations; but these observations are not always wisely chosen. Take, for example, Mr. R. C. Trevelyan's *THAMYRIS, OR IS THERE A FUTURE FOR POETRY?*¹ His faith in that future is indeed small and his words rather lugubrious; there is, too, much stuffy con-

¹See the criticism of this book by Herbert Read, *REASON AND ROMANTICISM* (1926) 68-71.

ventionalism about his methods and some of his suggestions. He falls back like many conservative critics upon an analysis of prosody which contributes little toward a reasonable conception of the future of poetry, based as it is upon obvious and trite principles of syllable-counting. Few will warm to his suggestion that classical quantitative verse has a future in English literature; and when he deplores the lack of good verse narratives of the psychological sort, he seems never to have heard of Edwin Arlington Robinson. Furthermore, it is very doubtful whether a return to the dramatic interlude or dialogue is at all probable: Theocritus, whom Mr. Trevelyan cites, was a master in a type of poetry limited in its possibilities and adaptability. Besides, pastoral poetry, or any modifications of it, does not strike me as a form likely to attract the poets of the future. One can more easily sympathize with his hopes for philosophic poetry; but the total effect of *THAMYRIS* is quite disappointing.

Where Mr. Trevelyan is dull, Mr. John Rodker, writing on *THE FUTURE OF FUTURISM*, is irritatingly flippant and more than a little obscure. His booklet suffers badly, both from incoherence and a misleading title. Giving many quotations whose source he fails to record, he presents the world-view of Dostoievski and the Russians as a guide for future literature. Admitting that "a richer, more adequate and significant language would seem to lie in the remotest future", he yet betrays a curious fondness for the abnormalities of speech revealed by the writings of the Stein-Cummings-Pound school; these, with the admixture of the Russian emphasis upon pathological sensibility, he speaks of almost in the same breath with compliments to the French fondness for general distinctions and clear meanings. Out of such a farrago of incompatibles it is difficult to extract any plausible theory; one is forced to believe that Mr. Rodker really had none, and was merely fulfilling his publisher's request for a book. At any rate, one fails to see the exact connection between, on the one hand, the development of mental agility heralded by Blake, Mallarmé, Roussel, and, on the other, the sublimity of the bowels as adumbrated in the works of Tchekhov and Dostoievski; both factors appeal mightily to the author of this wild little tract.

One can scarcely say that Mr. Bonamy Dobrée has written a more useful book in his *TIMOTHEUS, OR THE FUTURE OF THE*

THEATRE, a pleasant confection in the imaginative-allegorical style of the eighteenth century English essayists. It reminds one strongly of H. G. Wells, and gives us a no more trustworthy guide to the future than does any one of Mr. Wells' prodigious feats of imagination. All in all, one is disposed to give up the "Today and Tomorrow Series" as disappointing.

More substantial and extended efforts at analysis are, however, at hand and may be profitable to examine. Professional teachers of literature have exercised their acumen upon the literature of the future; their learning and reputation ensure a certain degree of respectful attention for their prophecies. Of those available at present I select two: Professor Albert Guérard's *LITERATURE AND SOCIETY*, and Professor Ashley H. Thorndike's *THE OUTLOOK FOR LITERATURE*.

Professor Guérard is a nimble writer whose style leans far backward in the attempt to avoid academic stuffiness. The barrage of epigram and sprightly colloquialism he lays down does not, however, conceal a certain thinness of thought. The numerous parallels with French literature, from which the author takes most of his illustrations, are useful at times; but a consistent stream of reference and allusion to that literature, in the approved manner of the comparatist, does not always accomplish its purpose, especially since the form of reasoning involved is merely analogy.

His book is essentially an attempt to improve upon Hippolyte Taine's method of literary study; and, although Mr. Guérard is not blind to Taine's more absurd conclusions, he uses much of his terminology and gets very little farther in illuminating the connection between literature and society. It may not be too much to say that he carefully avoids any thoroughgoing analysis of that relationship, confining his remarks to such agreeable but scarcely major topics as Environment, Climate, Physiology of the Author Type, The Enigma of Genius, The Public, Literature as Business. It is true he also speaks of the Economic, Political, Social Environment of literature, the Influence of Literature upon Life, and Literature in Utopia. But none of these topics serves to clarify adequately the relationships they imply. Wherever the author has occasion to mention the Marxist or so-called sociological school of criticism, he never fails to sneer in disapproval;

but he neither grapples squarely with the principles laid down by this school nor presents a more reasonable alternative to their interpretation of literature in regard to society. Mr. Calverton and Mr. Hicks he may have read, since their names appear in his bibliography; yet he does not offer any convincing arguments against the results of their investigations.

Part IV is concerned with a highly fanciful representation of literature in Utopia; the chief objection he offers against other Utopias than his own is the entirely gratuitous and unfounded contention that an appalling dullness will characterize the literature which will come into existence in a classless and static society, free from all conflict. The intellectual defeatism of Aldous Huxley as expressed in the *FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW* for December, 1930, may be read into these passages in *LITERATURE AND SOCIETY*. At any rate, it is obvious that Mr. Guérard's private Utopia bears no sensible resemblance to an existing Communist state nor to any approximation of the ideal society yet conceived by the mind of man. To regard his witticisms on this topic as so much pleasant but absurd moonshine is our only conclusion, as, indeed, it is also Mr. Guérard's conclusion; for his Utopia is a projection of the imagination alone and has no roots in current movements toward a new society. His ideal state possesses class distinctions in a scale based on literary taste, each class in constant emulation of the one above it, for all the world exactly like capitalism. A series of geographical and social aspects are sketched in with a light touch; but the net effect is nonsense. In the end, however, Mr. Guérard capitulates so far to reason and reality as to admit that "The opposition of aesthetes to such causes as pacifism, simplified spelling, a reformed calendar, an international language, world organization, a planned economy, is founded on a crude conception of art. Art under Utopia will simply be more disinterested and more refined than it is at present." One wonders how "a planned economy" slipped into this group of *bêtes noire*.

Professor Thorndike's book is by no means so witty, pretentious, nor provoking; its style and conclusions are cautiously conventional, in the time-honored method of the skilled lecturer to ladies' cultural uplift clubs. There is little pompous erudition, no statement to challenge cavil; but there is perhaps too much obvious and elementary explanation. In this mild scholarly view of the

world of letters from the study window there is nothing to excite either great interest or adverse criticism. From a reading of it one perceives that the author approaches his subject with love, enthusiasm, boundless optimism. He is deeply impressed by the tremendous volume of indiscriminate reading now done in the world and he looks upon it with some admiration, with, perhaps, the feeling that no matter what the quality, the quantity of literature produced and consumed has its advantages; even the masterpieces of the *Saturday Evening Post* find their place within the range of his catholic approval.

In more serious moments, the author expresses a belief that literature, in ways sufficiently analyzed, will come to have a greater influence upon society. The growing knowledge of the English language throughout the world, the increasing number of translations into English of foreign books, will have their effect upon the social and ethical consciousness; more criticism, more novels, more writing of an informative and reference nature are to be expected. Literature as an internationalizing force is a subject dear to the author's heart; here he grows more optimistic than ever, oblivious to the demonstrated failure of literature to improve international understanding, peace, or progress. While literature helps to bring together the isolated, the far distant, as the radio, trade, and travel do, it has yet to show how it can promote to any considerable degree that mutual respect and sympathy which make for international solidarity. The obvious conclusion is, naturally, that while economic rivalries and imperialistic ambitions rage without let or hindrance in the world, literary culture is powerless to bring about a peaceful state of affairs, as every historian knows.

The writer's hopes for poetry are set forth in the statement, "Verse is likely to be employed widely in the future for other reasons than the desire for sublimity or ecstasy", a most salutary prophecy which, unfortunately, lacks reinforcement as to ways or means for its realization or any suggestion as to the very nature of these new employments. Certainly one can agree with his assertion, "If we are to make a new world, we must make a new literature"; but both this world and this literature are left without benefit of adequate comment. The truth is that, like Mr. Guérard, he is unwilling to approach the more serious aspects

of the relation between literature and society; there is, furthermore, not the slightest hint in his remarks as to how this new world is to arise. The fervent hope of both professors is, one may surmise, that this world will come into being through a pleasant, though very vague, process of inevitable gradualism, at least by an evolution from which all the rudeness, rumble, and bloodshed of revolution will be miraculously absent. To be urbanely ribald, this is all quite in the spirit of that delightful anecdote told by Anatole France of the peasant girl who prayed to the Virgin: "O Thou who didst conceive without sin, grant that I may sin without conceiving."

It is not only to emphasize the unreality of the prophecies contained in these books that this brief discussion of them has been undertaken; my remarks point to an absence in them of any useful guiding principles, to a lack of knowledge of things as they actually are, the indispensable requirement for all reasonable prophecy. How helpless conservative criticism is to chart a new path for letters is suggested by their aimless nature; treading its way among well-worn dogmas, it cannot hope to offer anything genuinely constructive.

II

The mention of professional teachers of literature gives cause in this place for a contemplation of a rather large group of theorists who, some years ago, gained much attention in the press for their teaching of a retrogressive prophecy, of, as it were, a prophecy in reverse.

It seems, at this late date, a work of supererogation to heap another burden upon the lacerated backs of the New Humanists. They have been accused of trying to found a new religion; they have been charged with prudishness; they are held guilty of all sorts of crimes against the human spirit, from atheism to sheer dullness. But if, amid the *mélange* of hair-trigger criticism that prevailed a few years ago there is anything in respect to which they could have been said to be at fault, it was in making too much of a good thing out of their prophecy, in overpassing the great adage, "Nothing to excess". The New Humanists, with all their evident good faith and the undeniable value of some of their observations upon the modern scene, suffered from acute dichotomy.

In Irving Babbitt's excellent book, *THE MASTERS OF MODERN FRENCH CRITICISM*, in the chapter on Renan,² I find this criticism of that thinker: "Everything thus tends to assume in the intelligence of Renan the form of an acute antinomy—reason and sentiment, the classic and the romantic, the real and the ideal, science and morality. He is unable to fuse together and reconcile these contradictory terms in the light of a higher insight. Instead of choosing between opposite and equally plausible conclusions, he sets 'the different lobes of his brain to dialoguing' about them. Such a state, if prolonged, would lead to a paralysis of the will." Here I find one of the greatest of the New Humanists describing the very fault I have to find with the New Humanists themselves. The very nature of their thought—a categorical insistence upon clear distinctions between the various genres of art and literature, and, although they give no intimation as to how this is to be accomplished, the clarification of confusion in the modern world apart from art and literature,—forced them to an extreme which made imminent a sterility of their entire power for good.

The severe dichotomy between the genres which forms the thesis of Babbitt's *NEW LAOKOON*, for instance, seems only to strengthen this impression of strain, of a criticism pushed so far as to recoil upon itself. The critic is forced to the expedient of calling black too black and white too white; he is led, in the fervor of his apostleship, to a dogmatic view of the object of his criticism; what does not fit his purpose, furthermore, is mercilessly lopped off, and thus we have a remainder that is not at all indicative of the former unity—the romantic art and literature of the last two centuries. The subtitle of the book itself—*An Essay on the Confusion of the Arts*—gives us a clue at once to the author's single-minded purpose; he has put the blinders upon his reader from the start, and so closely-wrought and so concentrated is the substance of his thought that we are led to admire in spite of ourselves the subtlety which has made us see in Romanticism a multitude of bold iniquities we never dreamed were there.

Now this may be very well as an exercise in critical counter-

²I quote from the original form of this essay, the introduction to an edition of Renan's *SOUVENIRS D'ENFANCE ET DE JEUNESSE* (Heath, Boston, 1902) xxvii. It re-appears as Chapter IX of *THE MASTERS OF MODERN FRENCH CRITICISM* (1912).

point; but where there is so much smoke, I should like to see a bit more of the true fire i' the flint. There is something factitious about it all, like Lear, suddenly and petulantly oratorical, turning against Cordelia and as good as calling her a barbarous Scythian. Romanticism becomes, under the hands of its most formidable antagonist, a vague and gloomy monster, whereas the powers of rationalism shine ever brighter in the contrast of their samite robes. The little worm of dichotomy has bored its way through so many timbers manifestly rotten that we begin to fear that the entire structure will tumble at once before our eyes.

It is inevitable that thought so akin to metaphysics should shut its inward eye to much that is worthy and lasting in Romanticism. This myopia, to return to Babbitt's strictures on Renan, implies, in his own words, "a paralysis of the will", but the will to see the beam in one's own eye of criticism. The truth is that the New Humanists were never so consistent in their criticism as their dogmas would imply. After a lifetime of patient toil spent in the endeavor to systematize his critical views and to armor them against all attack, there are as many contradictions in the books of Irving Babbitt as ever. In his inconsistencies he was true to human nature; but this seems to have been the chief bond the tireless tumbler-about of books had with the world of realities. While one school of critics held, in their attack upon the New Humanists, to a materialistic interpretation of life which amounted to cramping dogma, while the religionists held to an equally impossible sentimental-humanitarian view that sprang from mysticism, the New Humanists, holding bitterly to their doctrines of "the inner check", maintained a type of theory as obviously impossible to cope with the complexities of life as the dogmas of the first and the wildly anthropomorphic dreams of the second of these groups of doctrinaires.

Yet if this were all that needed even now to be said about the New Humanists, the task would soon be done and we should not have begun to notice their positive value as critics of the modern age. Despite their high Toryism, which lingered with such tenacity in the pages of *THE AMERICAN REVIEW*, they seemed once to be the only set of critics in America who had a set of standards and whose "poesy is a gum which oozes" from some other source than their own emotions and subjective desires. It is a

sad truth that most American critics start from scratch and usually get no farther. They swing, as it were, from the shoetops, without much deliberation or forethought, and their blows have tended to lose their force in diffuseness and prejudice; this way lies Menckanism. I do not mean to suggest that the New Humanists possessed a monopoly of all the bases of sound criticism. What I do say is this: for all their scorn of classical standards, the opponents of the New Humanists seem to stand very much in need of those very standards which they have so vigorously condemned. It is scarcely a matter for doubt whether these critics could not profit from a scrutiny of those ancient pages with which they dispense in the scorn of silence—Dionysius Halicarnassus, say, Longinus, the much-abused Aristotle, the *Ars Poetica* of Horace, or even Boileau, to come down some centuries. Horace, among all those regrettable has-beens, is always ready with a cool word of good sense:

Descriptas servare vices operumque colores
cur ego si nequeo ignoroque poeta salutor?
Cur nescire pudens prave quam discere malo?

In other words, it is to no one's credit that he is ignorant of the rules of the game.

It was an obvious disadvantage in the eyes of the Modernist critics that the New Humanists were chiefly college professors and, therefore, of the academic tradition. Naturally, therefore, any critical dictum which issued from the halls of learning must have been tainted with dogma; nothing could be worth listening to which bore with it the faint echo of some dead giant's voice, some hint of Aristotle, a reminiscence of Plato or Cicero. Quite oblivious to the constant validity of classical principles, the Modernists were swept into opposing those who clung to them if only by the dire lesson of those School Men to whom the New Humanists have been likened.

Yet there is a larger sense in which the New Humanists can be said to have erred, a sense in which they could justly claim as their allies neither Goethe nor Matthew Arnold, neither Erasmus, Aristotle, nor Plato. This was precisely in respect to their celebrated watch-word of the "inner check". In the concluding pages of his study in comparative literature, THREE PHILOSOPHIC-

AL POETS, George Santayana^{*} writes in reference to the discipline of the true poet:

The outer life is for the sake of the inner; discipline is for the sake of freedom, and conquest for the sake of self-possession.

Here we may join to the cardinal sin into which the New Humanists fell, of being out of touch with life, the further error of misunderstanding and therefore misusing for their private purpose a principle as old as literature itself, and one more simply and tritely expressed in the ancient saying about "liberty in law". There can be no value in a stern asceticism which does not put to any good use its self-imposed obedience to a convention. There is something of futile gesture in such limitation. The New Humanists shut themselves up in a prison whose walls were severe, chill, luminous plane surfaces inscribed with all the reverent wisdom of the ages; but they were impotent to effect great good by the mere endless contemplation of perfection and by mourning the inability of modern life and literature to approach that icy excellence. It is well, then, that the New Humanists received a name which cuts them off clearly from any other school of criticism; for their humanism has about it none of the warmth and life of that humanism with which the world is familiar in Plato or Goethe, Erasmus or Cicero. Surely the latter, in his *Pro Archia* or any other writings of his on the function of literature, never said that the poet should restrain himself for the mere sake of restraint, or that the orator should avoid the Asiatic floridity of expression because the Attic severity was more severe.

It is the true meaning of asceticism as defined by the best minds of all time that one should hold to in discussing the New Humanism. If we conceive of asceticism as something active, perceptive, alert, as a discipline founded upon a rational contemplation of the expedience as well as the moral value of the action, the New Humanists stand convicted by almost every count of a false asceticism. Because a real interest in human life implies a surrender, in part at least, to the stream of life, to sympathy, hope, and fear, they recoiled from this tendency toward what they regarded as Romanticism, having confused Romanticism with most of life

^{*}Harvard University Press, 1927, p. 213.

itself as it appeared to them, and shut themselves off from all contact with existence except as they found it, woefully attenuated and shriveled and foreshortened, in books of erudite critical theory. It is possible that the New Humanists might have been more keenly aware of "the still, sad music of humanity" had they been born poets, or, at least, like Plato, served a short and turbulent apprenticeship in the art. The training they could have found in it would have forever saved them from narrowness and learned dogmatism. It must have been with some such vision of the end unobscured by the means, the vast whole undistorted by its parts, that Wordsworth, himself a self-acknowledged prophet, gave to all proud doctrinaires a high warning when he wrote:

Denial and restraint I prize
No farther than they breed a second Will more wise.

III

A consideration of the New Humanists increases at least one conviction: in the solution of the spiritual problems which confront the present age, both philosophers and professors cannot be denied their word. In fact, it is a heartening sign that philosophy tends more and more to apply itself to questions too long regarded as exclusively economic and political in nature and as best expressed in terms of the class-struggle alone or of the clash of opposing principles of social forces. It may be well, therefore, to turn to another philosopher and teacher.

Señor José Ortega y Gasset has, in Spain and elsewhere, enjoyed the great repute enjoyed by Paul Valéry and Count Keyserling in European thought. While all three thinkers have unsatisfactory aspects, usually taking the shape of a vague intellectualized mysticism and a tendency toward irritatingly general assumptions which resemble dogma, they have, when their writing is not too windy and magniloquent, a gift for probing to the heart of our perplexities in a way that goes far to condone their failings. Señor Ortega, despite a too-great fondness for drawing his authority from German thinkers of all brands and an occasional distressing lapse into the same curious subjectivity that renders much of Unamuno's *TRAGIC SENTIMENT OF LIFE* so in-

complete and dissatisfying, is, nevertheless, firmly grounded in historical tradition; he draws many of his illustrations from Greek and Roman history and literature, albeit by way of German textbooks. He has devoted a large part of his surprising output as editor of the REVISTA DE OCCIDENTE and as lecturer at the University of Madrid to an analysis of modern civilization with, I believe, some valuable results. It is true that his REVOLT OF THE MASSES, whose central point of departure is a significant observation of Werner Sombart's upon the gigantic growth of European population since 1815, justifies the criticism V. F. Calverton has made of its undue emphasis on the abuses of democracy without regard for the conditions under which those abuses arise; and it is certainly a tract against Communism which, by a simple substitution of terms, could as easily be taken as a counterblast to Fascism also. Moreover, one cannot accept his too facile explanation of the failure of Communism to win wide adherence in Europe, namely, that it does not offer the masses a greater hope of happiness than existing forms of government outside of Russia; too many complex factors, including the military force and violent propaganda of Fascist and capitalist rulers as well as the total collapse of Social Democracy, must enter into the final decision here.

But by deliberately reducing the political factor to a minimum in his EL TEMA DE NUESTRO TIEMPO and approaching his theme from an exclusively philosophic point of view he has at least presented a discussion in general and objective terms. In order to provide a means toward more easily judging a work that deserves to be better known, I have summarized the argument of this book here in a condensed and perhaps too fragmentary paraphrase. I have throughout used the original Spanish text as it appears in the author's OBRAS (Madrid, 1932).

Ortega begins by rejecting the collectivist and individualist interpretation of history: i. e., the theory of mass versus individual, and substitutes the *generation* as a functional biological unit, since it represents a compromise between mass and individual. From this point of view, the reactionary and the revolutionary of the nineteenth century are seen to have much more affinity with each other than either has with us today. The generation is an organic movement which builds upon past generations in living

in two dimensions: accepting the past and expressing its own individuality at the same time. In certain generations, however, youth is subordinate to age; in other generations, the relationship is reversed in a sort of rhythm which *metahistory* (Ortega's own suggestion) might explain, on the analogy of physiology and the clinic.

Certain generations fail to accept their historical duty and become discordant with themselves. Such is the present generation in all Europe and especially in Spain. Radicals overemphasize the political factor; but political discord is secondary to differences of a biological, physical, historico-philosophic, ethical, and logical nature. "The destiny of our generation is not to be liberal or reactionary, but precisely to disengage ourselves from this antiquated dilemma."

Prophecy is a part of history. Schlegel was right when he called the historian a prophet in reverse. But history differs from life in having no set of laws by which events arise: as, for instance, we know what sort of leaves and fruit a certain tree will bear but have less certain means for prognostication as to historical developments. By analogy, however, the Roman people were an example of the gradual unfolding of life under certain conditions, of which Caesarism was a generic form from the time of the Gracchi onwards and vindicated the prophecies of Cato. Psychological necessity gives a groundwork of unified development to history, and insofar as history represents the probable acts of men under certain circumstances, prophecy is possible. Ortega is careful to point out here, however, that this view has nothing to do with Spengler's "historical prophecy", although it is hard to see the exact difference.

It is clear that the near future is a prolongation of what is essential in humanity, normal and not adventitious, as a matter of psychological analysis. "Politics, for example, is one of the more secondary functions of historical life, in the sense that it is the mere consequence of all the rest [of the activities of life]." To this extent Ortega accepts historical materialism. The emergent epoch first influences thought, then action. Modern thought therefore provides a glass through which to observe the future: science, in fact, in the widest sense of the term. Our generation

must concentrate on thought, not politics, if it is to fulfil its historic rôle.

Scientific thought is closely bound up with each generation as its unified expression. But absolute truth is not compatible with the individual thought ["opinion"] of each generation. "The" truth does not, therefore, exist; there are only "relative truths", according to the relativist doctrine which characterizes this generation. But if absolute truth is thus rejected, relativism cannot take itself seriously. Relativism becomes, in amputating faith in truth as a radical fact of human life, pure scepticism. The attempt to preserve the flexibility of truth hence fails; as Herbert said, "Every good beginner is a sceptic, but every sceptic is only a beginner."

An apposite tendency also appears since the Renaissance: rationalism, which, in order to preserve truth, renounces life. Truth is invariable, not subject to the will of the individual. Rationalism and relativism, two opposing views, produce division in human society, nor can rationalism rescue us from becoming the consistent victims of passing opinions, observations, conclusions whose anti-historic foe it is. Our errors arise apart from the Cartesian reason; the human will provides the infinite variety of history, which pure reason would make impossible. "History is substantially the history of human errors." The thought of Descartes represents, according to the relativist theory made famous by Einstein, a new sensibility, a manifestation of a new epoch which looks forward to the future.

Descartes' reversal of the accepted perspective in emphasizing the quantitative or geometric universe as against the immediate qualitative universe of the sense-perceptions has produced its repercussions in modern physics, and much wishful thinking has resulted in the four-dimensional physics postulated thirty years ago. The modern man is a Cartesian in his thought, and thus in revolt against the past; political institutions also a part of the pre-geometric era of physics become the object of his antipathies likewise and he seeks to replace them with institutions derived by pure reason. Since the mass of humanity is incapable of this logical process, the Cartesian (modern) man rejects both past and present, projecting himself and his system into the future. Thus rationalism applied to politics results in revolution. Revol-

utionary thought rejects the past, the "vital" reason of history. Legislation for the future, as exemplified by the French in 1790, seems to us crude and narrow. Mathematical principles cannot govern our more complex life. Absolutism remains even when the prince is guillotined and principle substituted for him. This clash between rationalism and relativism is the dilemma of our time.

The fact that thought as well as breathing is a biological function tends rather to confute this dichotomy of view and serves to bring us out of the dilemma. The human will striving in moral choice for the good—conceived of as the service of God, of the ego, or of the greatest possible number of human beings—implies a norm outside of ourselves. Both will and intellectual processes reveal a dualism comprised of both rationalism and relativism, subjective and objective norms, which man must preserve in order to preserve life itself. The cultural activities of society also arise from the biologic sphere, but these in turn have a value in themselves apart from their biological usefulness: justice, truth, moral rectitude, beauty are, as it were, the end-products of such vital cultural activities. That value in itself possessed by these end-products we call "spirituality", what the Greeks called *nous* as opposed to *psyche*. Rationalism tries to cut away this biological basis of culture; a reason which disclaims an identity as a vital function among others is a mere cold abstraction. Life and the spiritual are one.

The two phases of the vital human phenomenon (Ortega's vague phrase), biology and spirituality, obey two powers: biological necessity and the ultravital principle of laws of logic. The new sensibility subordinates spirituality to biological function. The double imperative derived from this situation is the following: life must be cultured but culture must be vital. The disequilibrium between these two leads to degeneration: barbarism or Byzantinism. Liberal and democratic ideas proceed from a cultural utopism which depends upon formalistic, schematic thought; they tend to become accepted without question in a mystical fashion. The rationalism of the present becomes confused, antiquated, inertly traditionalistic. Since the Renaissance, culture has become increasingly a superficial, unilateral, fictitious sort of thing superimposed upon effective life. One comes to believe that

he believes in culture, by a species of wishful thinking. English cant is really a European, not solely a British, phenomenon. The Oriental, not used to this separating culture and life, marvels at and scorns the hypocrisy of the West. The lack of loyalty to European culture has brought about the decline in its vitality, while science, ethics, art, religious faith, and law have by a sort of *ankylosis* come to hold an abnormal relation of superiority to the life they should normally serve.

The "reason" of Socrates and his age supplanted the spontaneous element in life, producing a dualism which constitutes the true meaning of the Socratic irony. This emphasis upon reason continues through the centuries of European civilization until about 1700 when, after the systematizations of Descartes, Leibniz, Spinoza were achieved, reason begins to find its limits and the nature of its error. It is this period of cultural evolution which coincides with our generation, whose problem it is to reverse the relationship and restore the true balance between life and reason. At this point occurs the passage quoted in Chapter IV, note —;⁴ it is the most concise expression of the author's central theme. We now begin to suspect reason itself and to resent its pretensions to supremacy. This is the irreverent irony of Don Juan: pure reason yields to vital reason.

From this point onward the argument takes the form of an elaboration of the central theme just referred to, and a survey of the negative and positive values of life, as seen by Christian and Buddhist, is presented. The former elevation in history of cultural values is regarded as a sort of Christianity without God, and the identification of culture itself with progress is pointed out. Culture for the sake of life, not life for the sake of culture, is the keynote of the present generation.

This reversal of emphasis appears, for example, in art, which becomes a game without seriousness and in the great enthusiasm for sports which fills us today. The ancient hypocrisy of neglecting the values of life itself produces a grave disorientation in a generation which exalts these values. While one may say more confidently with Goethe, "The more I think, the more evident it appears to me that life exists simply to be lived", it is more dif-

⁴See SEWANEE REVIEW, Oct.-Dec. 1939, pp. —.

ficult to find a new balance, freed from the hierarchical restraints of the culture of the past. As art becomes only a variety of football, and sports take the place of the patient labor which, in other times, was expended upon the creation of works of art, the concept of liberty becomes merely a formula and politics a matter for derision, not for the almost religious adoration shown for them by the men who swore the oath of the Tennis Court. Our entire perspective in art, science, and politics is radically altered.

Culture, however, is not completely denied in favor of barbarism; merely its claim to exclusive domination is denied. Its values remain intact. It has been regarded from within the limited systems and horizons of earlier philosophers, whose outlook we must now amplify with our own, in a world infinitely more complex and disconcerting than our own.

There follow two appendices which deal with the idea of revolution and the historic meaning of Einstein's theory respectively, interesting for their application of the results arrived at in the earlier part of the book. Ortega neatly disposes of Marxian socialism and all revolutions (which he considers unlikely to occur in the future) by linking them with the rationalism he attacks and arguing, by historical analogy, against their success. This is a rather naïve section of the book whose central fault lies in the attempt to fit historical facts into a personal theory; with these remarks we may bring the summary of the book to a close.

Whatever the defects of this perhaps too-finely drawn analysis, it is evident that Ortega presents a contradiction between two world-views which it is our task to resolve. The emphasis our age is placing upon the values of life instead of pure reason may produce as distorted a view as that of the rationalists of the past; but it is the direction in which we are moving and, for good or evil, our destiny remains to be worked out in the light of a greater understanding of life in its social and biological aspects at least. European Fascism is now busily engaged in distorting biology and all culture as well into political propaganda; but despite the serious dislocations in cultural tradition produced by such barbarous antics, we may yet achieve, in those parts of the world still called democratic, an enduring synthesis in art which will

provide the basis for a greater literature than is now represented even by the socially conscious writers of our time.

IV

I pass over two lesser works of prophecy* and come to Stephen Spender's *THE DESTRUCTIVE ELEMENT*. While not in any exact sense a prophetic utterance, it is of great interest as another definite expression of kinship which binds together the Auden-Spender-Lewis group. Its point of view in regard to Communism is much the same, and with the same qualifications, as that of C. Day Lewis in *A HOPE FOR POETRY*; but the emphasis upon a moral-political world-view now imperative for the writer is stronger.

Almost half of the book is devoted to an analysis of the purpose shown in the novels of Henry James, who is taken as, in certain ways, the immediate spiritual ancestor of Eliot, Joyce, Yeats, Lawrence, and several other poets and novelists dead and living since the War. The central force of moral criticism and inner dissatisfaction with civilization which impresses the careful reader of James's work—ignored, by the way, in Granville Hicks' *THE GREAT TRADITION*—is brought out in detail by quotation and résumé of his works, especially of the three last great novels, *THE WINGS OF THE DOVE*, *THE GOLDEN BOWL*, and *THE AMBASSADORS*.

The progression of James's art toward the creation of a world of his own (usually interpreted as an escapist motive); his treatment of the unconscious with its palpable influence upon Joyce; the subtle technical elements of his style and their resultant difficulties for the general reader; lastly, the profound indictment of our civilization which is the net effect of his work—all this is treated in the first sections of Spender's book. He follows the discussion of James with chapters on Yeats, Eliot, Lawrence, Auden and other less well known writers are commented upon in the concluding pages.

What is most significant about Spender's critique beyond its very convincing presentation of the historical relationship between

*Robert Graves, "The Future of the Art of Poetry"; *HOGARTH ESSAYS* (New York, 1928) 163-193, although of interest, is really not concerned with the future of poetry at all but with its technique. *THE FUTURE OF THE NOVEL*, edited by Meredith Starr (Boston, Small, Maynard, 1921) is a series of brief and insufficient comments by 62 novelists, almost exclusively British, upon the prospects of their art.

James and later writers is its strong emphasis upon the moral choice between the art for art's sake, the personal legendary or escapist, and the revolutionary attitudes now available for the writer. This is shown in such sentences as these:

If we hope to go on existing, if we want a dog's chance of a right to breathe, to go on being able to write, it seems that we have got to make some choice outside the private entanglements of our personal life. (p. 223)

If I am right in saying that the struggle of Communism or Socialism against the anti-Socialist forces of the whole world exists, I think that the reader, in judging left-wing literature, must not judge it in the same way as he argues against Communism. It is not a question of whether he thinks the premises are false, but of whether the premises are about realities, in the sense that there are political and moral realities which are more enduring than the external world of literary realism. What he should ask is—Does this Communist approach lead to a greater and more fundamental understanding of the struggle affecting our whole life today? (p. 227)

The writer who grasps anything of Marxist theory, feels that he is moving in a world of reality, and in a purposive world, not merely a world of obstructive and oppressive things. (p. 228)

These sentences from the very interesting chapter on "Writers and Manifestoes" as well as the very subtitle of the book—*A Study of Modern Writers and Beliefs*—show a concern with moral purpose in literature that finds its fullest expression in the entire last section.

The special contribution of W. H. Auden to the problem of choice which confronts the writer is discussed in a chapter called "The Airman, Politics and Psychoanalysis", and in Part III, "In Defence of a Political Subject". To the analysis of literary purpose in Marxian revolutionary terms provided by other writers, Auden adds an analysis on the basis of psycho-analysis, pointing out the need for a change of *heart* in the individual, something as necessary for the new and better society with which Auden, Lewis, and Spender are concerned as the change in the ownership of the means of production desired by the Communist. It is a question, in spite of the entire reasonableness of this more inclusive view, whether Communism, as Spender seems to think, has ever so

completely neglected the psycho-analytic aspects of life in contradistinction to the merely economic aspect. At any rate, a change of heart is something far more vague, partaking far more of the mystical thought of D. H. Lawrence (the spiritual father of this young English group) and less immediately possible under any form of government than changes in the economic system, which, being made by man, can be changed by him. It is also quite possible that Communism, in those aspects of it most closely resembling a religion of conversion, does actually produce a change of heart as radical as any produced by great religious movements in the past. I cannot conceive of anything less drastic than a change of heart (certainly it cannot be merely a fear of punishment, as assumed by the vulgar) which can account for the messianic fervor and deep self-abnegation under which Russian Communists have lived for years.

[To be concluded in the next issue.]

by Dean B. Lyman

JANUS IN ALEXANDRIA

A DISCUSSION OF "ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA"

PASCAL remarked that if Cleopatra's nose had been shorter, the face of the world would have been changed, and De Gourmont, quoting this witticism, went on to say, "As for me, I believe that Cleopatra rather resembled Dido, who, according to Scarron's mot, was 'somewhat snub-nosed, in the African style.'" These epigrams add nothing to historical knowledge of Cleopatra, but much to the pleasure of thinking of her. What I shall say of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* in these pages will add nothing to critical knowledge of the play, but perhaps something to the pleasure of reading it. For if T. S. Eliot and others are right in thinking that each age must create its own approach to the masterpieces of literature, I think it is necessary to add, or at least to think, that each individual must create his own interpretation. It is well, on the one hand, that criticism in our own day should ask as persistently as it does what kind of pleasure the author intended us to take in his works. It is well enough, too, that criticism should attempt to find out, in regard to a Shakespeare play, from what points of view the several strata of an Elizabethan audience were capable of enjoying such a work of art. But, on the other hand, a different kind of criticism may try to establish, not so much the facts which justify an interpretation, as a personal interpretation which does not violate the facts; and this latter criticism may have validity for more persons than the critic who makes it. With no further apology, therefore, I shall tell why the usual readings of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* give me small pleasure, and how I have been able to read the play for myself in a way that heightens for me its significance and effect.

The effect of this tragedy upon any reader is that of great tragedy. Criticism which is worth anything must explain and enforce

this effect. It is therefore a strange fact that the most favorable—nay, idolatrous—critics make the play shrink and dwindle under their explanations. I express a personal reaction; yet is it not true, for instance, that if Antony must be regarded as a mere slave of lust, or a gray-haired fool, or a weakling for either lust or love, he becomes an object of contempt and not of tragic pity? Neither will the hypothesis stand that Shakespeare intended a study of the disintegration of a once-great soul, for to think that such a study of Antony could have the tragic force of Shakespeare's study of Macbeth is to forget that Macbeth is a tragic hero because, although a villain, he is a man, whereas Antony, if he has sold his mind and will to Venus, has bartered away his manhood, too. A belittled Antony belittles the closing scenes of the play, and the play's greatness evaporates. Again, how can Cleopatra be stripped of her infinite variety under the label of either *wife* or *harlot* without curdling our sympathies and spoiling the closing scenes? Can she be exhibited to us as a lascivious bait to an old voluptuary without curdling our sympathies and spoiling the closing scenes? No wonder the greatness of a tragedy is impaired when the main characters—intentionally or not, by playwright or critic—are made contemptible.

And to go beyond these objections, a demurrer must be entered against whittling down the scope of the story itself. The misfortunes of two lovers do not necessarily make a romantic tragedy. When they do, however, the theme of the romance must be idealistic to be great, and the passion of neither Antony nor Cleopatra for the other is idealistic. Moreover, the superimposition of martial and imperial extravaganza upon idealistic romance cannot raise the latter form to tragic heights, for extravaganza does not in itself contain the seeds of a tragic theme. Extravaganza has no portion in "the fierce dispute Betwixt damnation and impassioned clay". Such an one, then, who adds extravaganza to unspiritual romance in the expectation of their summing up to tragic greatness is supporting the proposition that nothing plus nothing is more than nothing.

Yet is one to deny that Antony and Cleopatra are lovers, or that the play is gorgeous with historical pageantry? Is Antony to be made wise and temperate, Cleopatra holy as well as fair?

No, but the unifying principle of the play must be discovered, and it must be found to be such as to narrow neither the scope nor the tragic significance of the play. The scope will be narrowed if any essential element of the story is treated as incidental, and the tragic significance will be narrowed if either of the protagonists is made contemptible.

I

What, then, are the essential elements of the story? It is a complex story. It is a story

Of the fall of a man and a woman from the summit of earthly bliss,

Of the evanescence of material joys and triumphs,

Of an earthly passion of lovers who stand up peerless,

Of the pageantry of emperors, courts, and contending armies,

Of the mighty conflicts of ancient empires;

it is a story of all these things, yet over and above them all, and in such a way as to give them their real significance, it is the story

Of a grandeur-delusion that founders a noble soul;

Of a Janus-soul in his perplexity and tragic downfall.

Such, I believe, is the story of the play—a grand and dramatic conception, complex and tragically significant, that stands or falls with all its elements, and will not suffer parturition.

The unifying principle of this story, as I have hinted in the foregoing list and in the title of this essay, resides in the perplexity of a soul which, Janus-like, looks two ways. Antony and Cleopatra, perhaps no less than Hamlet, are characters of great psychological complexity. Like Hamlet, Antony cannot resolutely choose one difficult alternative and resign the other; moreover, his inability to do so leads, like Hamlet's, to tragic disaster, but a disaster in which Cleopatra and an empire must fall with him, and a beautiful if mundane love-story must reach an end, and the reputation of a great soldier must at last be tarnished with defeat. Despite the fact, however, that the central conflict of the play is in Antony's mind, it would be a great error in criticism to speak as if Antony alone, without Cleopatra, were the focus of the disastrous results of that conflict. In fact, any interpretation which partitions and divides the fates of Antony and Cleopatra must be

false. Furthermore, any interpretation which treats the romance of these lovers apart from the circumstances of splendor and power in which alone that romance could have matured is demonstrably false. Only after one recognizes the fact that the strands of the plot are close-knit, with but few merely incidental elements, does the unifying principle make itself perceptible.

The play is well named for both protagonists, as the crux of its interest lies in the conjunction of their stars. Without Antony, Cleopatra is only "a morsel, cold upon Dead Caesar's trencher; nay, . . . a fragment of Cneius Pompey's". Without Cleopatra—why, Enobarbus has stated the matter justly: Antony without her "had left unseen a wonderful piece of work; which not to have been blessed withal would have discredited [his] travel". Yet wherein lies the wonder of this "piece of work"? The answer is not to be found in any chance-phrase from her dying lips. "Husband, I come," she says in the moment before her death. The psychology of this wifely speech is interesting. There is a propriety of thought as well as of action which leads us to shift our thoughts to the highest plane when once a course of action has been adopted. The lesser and ignobler reasons for what we do are sloughed off in our instinctive aspiration toward the noblest motives. Shakespeare is not inconsistent when he gives to the dying Cleopatra speeches of chaste and wifely tenderness, even if his earlier portrayals show her a wily and practiced courtesan. The explanation is simply this: with death literally at hand, all that was noble in her passion for Antony mounted into the apex of her thoughts and feelings. "Husband, I come," says Cleopatra, and in that moment she is indeed the noble wife of a noble Roman. But can that moment make of her a Portia? If "now from head to foot" she is "marble-constant", if "now the fleeting moon No planet is of [hers]", does—can this moment Romanize the serpent of old Nile? The question is rhetorical.

Rare Egyptian! Royal wench! Yet it was she—this wife, this Portia—she it was who had drunk Antony to his bed, and had put her tires and mantles on him whilst she wore his sword Philippan. Enobarbus saw her once

Hop forty paces through the public street;
And having lost her breath, she spoke, and panted,
That she did make defect perfection,
And, breathless, power breathe forth.

To Philo, Antony under her sway "is become the bellows and the fan To cool a gypsy's lust"; he is "the triple pillar of the world transform'd Into a strumpet's fool". To Antony himself, at a moment of revulsion of feeling, she is "one that looks on feeders [servants]". There is no need to multiply illustration. One cannot thumb through the play even in haste without turning up evidence of Cleopatra's riggish nature. Is this her real nature? Yes, of course, although no more than a part of it. Between the extremes of harlotry and noble passion run all the gradations of her womanhood. She is neither wife nor courtesan alone, is not one kind of woman or another, but is Woman indeed, and in this universality of her womanhood, unpruned and unparticularized, is she immortal.

But if Cleopatra ought not to be divided from herself or from Antony, no more ought these peerless lovers to be divided from the circumstances which make their happiness supreme. The play must not be read as a tragedy of love or passion alone. Swinburne says to Faustine in his poem about her,

If one should love you with real love
(Such things have been),
You'd give him—poison shall we say?
Or what, Faustine?

Cleopatra's passion was not the barren and deadly passion of Faustine, but what subtle and devastating answer would Cleopatra's have been to the love of a Romeo? What fascination would Antony have perceived in a Juliet? The love of Camille and Armand in Dumas' affecting romance is more beautiful in a small countryhouse than it had been in the fashionable salons of Paris. The modern reading of *Romeo and Juliet* on the stage removes all emphasis from the Capulet-Montagu quarrel except as an obstacle to the union of the lovers. No great loss attends this alteration. The love of Romeo and Juliet would have been, like Armand and Camille's, beautiful and enduring in a cottage. But to see what the story of Antony and Cleopatra would become when reduced to bourgeois level, one need only let Victor Hugo retell it for him in outline.

A spendthrift, smitten with a courtesan whom he lavishly supports, decides, in order to repair his fortune, to marry a woman whom he does not love; hardly has the ceremony

been concluded before he returns to his mistress, to consume with her the dower of his wife. The deserted wife seeks the protection of her brother, who, in a rage, challenges the husband. A duel follows; the spendthrift falls, and the courtesan in despair commits suicide.

Such is the material for a sentimental romance or a melodrama which remains upon reduction of the story from the imperial to the domestic scale. The protagonists are shorn not alone of pomp and magnificence, but of decency. Antony is indeed a strumpet's fool. The theme is ignoble, and nothing much is left to account for the fascination the tragedy exerts when the courtesan is made a queen, the lover Emperor of the East, and the brother Emperor of Rome. For the grand scale does not of itself make great tragedy, witness many pitiable Elizabethan imitations of *Tamburlaine* to the contrary; nor could even Shakespeare's magic of poetry do so, exercised upon an ignoble theme.

II

If *Antony and Cleopatra* is really a tragedy of love or passion, Shakespeare might well have forestalled Dryden in the use of the title *All for Love, or the World Well Lost*. But it is hard to suppose that either Antony or the rare Egyptian would have given up the world for love. Dryden's play confirms the difficulty of the supposition. Shakespeare's lovers are worldly of the worldly. At the time of their first meeting, both were seasoned pleasure-seekers, adepts in voluptuous arts. The French give us our words to describe them: they were blase, ennuye. They had already passed, as William Winter acutely observes, "out of the mere instinctive life of the senses, into that more intense and thrilling life wherein the senses are fed and governed by the imagination". Their heaven is sophisticated and material. Here is no idealistic boy and girl attraction, as with Romeo and Juliet, nor yet a sophisticated passion transmuted by idealism, as with Armand and Camille, but a material union which could never have been conceived, much less maintained, without the external accompaniments which made it glorious. It was a comradeship of royal pleasure-seekers, in which the undoubted personal attraction of the lovers for each other is the cementing factor. These boon-

companions wander through the streets to note the qualities of people, sleep day out of countenance and make the night light with music, roast wild boars whole for breakfast, angle from the banks of the Nile to distant music, dance the Egyptian Bacchanals, and kiss away kingdoms and provinces, mocking the midnight bell with gaudy nights. The indispensable setting for their love—its *sine qua non*—is pageantry, extravagance, barbaric splendor; these lovers must turn to such diversions after an embrace as infallibly as a sunflower follows the sun. In tragedies of love or passion, on the contrary, such external accompaniments are irrelevant; love alone is enough.

Love would not in itself, I am sure, have sufficed for either Antony or Cleopatra. Their union could not have subsisted without its attendant felicities, nor without the magnificent capacity on either side to make the most of these felicities. Whether Cleopatra loved Antony with a real love or not, he was nevertheless the man without whom her life could not go on. One critic has questioned her good faith in the following terms:

That she loves him there is no doubt at all, loves him as she is capable of loving. But it is more than doubtful whether she kills herself for love of him or in sheer desperation to avoid the scorn and vengeance of Caesar. I greatly fear that if she had been confident of reigning in Rome as she had reigned in Alexandria, Antony's poor dust might have tossed forgotten in the burning winds of Egypt.

This is all very well, except that with Antony dead, she could in no conceivable circumstances have reigned in Rome as she had reigned in Alexandria. I am aware that I am distorting the meaning of the passage just now quoted, but the material point remains that the happiness of her Alexandrian rule could not have been duplicated there or elsewhere without the living presence of Antony. If Caesar had loved her, had submitted to her every whim, had made her mistress of Rome, yet his cold fancy could never have devised the wild pranks and revels which were the natural inspiration of Antony's imaginative genius for pleasure-making. No one but Antony, her god of men—Antony in the height of power, with his human impulsiveness tuned to a pitch of godlike magnificence—could have given Cleopatra the life which seemed

to her the *summum bonum* of earthly existence. Caesar had more of material power and wealth than Antony; he lacked the human warmth to have used them as Antony used his. Cleopatra knew this when she killed herself. Now, was Antony a whit the less completely under the necessity of Cleopatra's inspiration? Could he have played the god—been anything but the Roman captain—without her? I think not. Cleopatra without Antony, or Antony without Cleopatra, and either of them without an empire, or both of them without their materialistic but human delight in sports and revels, would be nothing.

III

By now I have perhaps sufficiently established the complexity of Shakespeare's theme, but it is important that this complexity should be recognized as not merely existent but essential. Only thus can the full range and scope of the tragedy be realized. The greatness of the play, however, depends not only upon the grandeur of Shakespeare's conception, but upon the tragic significance of its central conflict. One must therefore gain to the pith of the story. Now, I have spoken of Antony as a Janus-soul, perplexed in the objects of his will, divided in his allegiance to opposing alternatives. Antony is two Antonies, as Hamlet is two Hamlets. He has two soul-sides, "one to face the world with". Well, there is nothing in the play, as I read it, which cannot be referred to this conflict between two natures in one man. It is the central fact of the play.

Antony the Roman captain. Antony the Alexandrian god. Who are these two Antonies? The Roman is the one the world sees: a great captain, the triple pillar of the world, but with his best days behind him; yet an old lion, one who with his sword had quartered the world. Him Demetrius sees, him Philo, him Enobarbus; great Caesar and Sextus Pompeius half scorn, half fear him, lest being the libertine he seems, he may become again the captain he was; Antony, even, looks upon his own Roman self, and can (in a Roman moment) think of himself as one who has lost command, has followed that he blushes to look upon, has let his sword be made weak by his affection. As a Roman he stands before the world, and with a Roman eagle-glance he pierces his own Alexan-

drian deeds when a Roman thought hath struck him. This Antony looks back into the past for his own identity, and scarcely finds it in the present. Over against him, shrined in the present, towers the Alexandrian god. Says Cleopatra:

I dreamed there was an Emperor Antony:
O! such another sleep, that I might see
But such another man...
His face was as the heavens...
His legs bestrid the ocean; his rear'd arm
Crested the world.....his delights
Were dolphin-like, they show'd his back above
The element they liv'd in;...in his livery
Walk'd crowns and crownets, realms and islands were
As plates dropp'd from his pocket...
Think you there was, or might be, such a man
As this I dreamed of?

Antony's stature in Cleopatra's eyes is more than human; his magnanimity and might outreach humanity. With superhuman carelessness this god, or demi-god, toys with the little rulers and kingdoms of the world, and like Jove at ease upon Olympus, he is regal and splendid in his diversions. He stands above morality and responsibility, above the world's petty questioning, in a region where his own whim is morality and the law. Alexandria is not Alexandria but Olympus, where Cleopatra in right of her own divinity shares a supra-mundane throne with him. Thus Cleopatra idolizes Antony.

Transfer this conception of him from Cleopatra's mind to Antony's and you have the material of delusions of grandeur. Does Antony assume the god? Positive evidence that he does is scanty. True, he slights Caesar in slighting Caesar's messengers. Later, he slights Caesar through Octavia, and enthrones himself with Cleopatra in the market-place of Alexandria, dispensing kingdoms to his bastard sons. Again, he has Caesar's messenger whipped for calling Caesar greater than he. These acts befit the omnipotence of a god more than the policy of an emperor, and indeed, throughout the play Antony proclaims himself in grandiose vaunts which ring as if he thought himself omnipotent.

Inconclusive, even negligible, as this positive evidence of Antony's delusions of grandeur may be, the negative evidence is to my mind simple and conclusive, for if Antony in his dealings with Caesar or in his flight from Actium acts in the character of a man,

he acts contemptibly, and the tragic greatness of the play is dissipated along with the nobility of Antony. If he acts as a man merely, Demetrius is right in speaking of "this dotage of our general's"; Caesar is right in saying that Antony should "be chid As we rate boys, who, being mature in knowledge, Pawn their experience to their present pleasure, And so rebel to judgment"; Pompey is right in naming him "an amorous surfeiter"; and Antony himself is right in exclaiming, "I am so lated in the world that I Have lost my way forever". As but a man, he stands marked in the play as a fool in his judgments and a weakling in his actions. Why did he desert Octavia? why insist on fighting Caesar by water? why flee from Actium? why offer personal combat to Caesar? How can these schoolboy acts of war and statesmanship be reconciled with the political sagacity and soldierly genius of the Antony who stirred the Roman citizenry to revolt against Brutus and Cassius and who defeated those conspirators in the battle of Philippi? Was Pompey wrong in saying of him in comparison with Caesar and Lepidus, "His soldiership Is twice the other twain"? In one who holds himself a god such weakness and folly may be excused as arising from a deluded sense of immunity; in Antony the soldier and statesman they must be deplored as evidences of painfully deteriorated virtue—nay more, of lost manhood. In brief, judge Antony by Roman standards, and his actions are those of a schoolboy or a lecher, the hero of the play is a dotard or a degenerate, and the reader who feels the play to be great must accept the logic of the critic who cannot find the greatness in it. These painful difficulties can be avoided by regarding Antony as a victim of delusions of grandeur.

Where is the reader who has not squirmed as he read of Antony's flight from Actium?—the pursuit of the unspeakable by the unbearable! With that stench in his nostrils, he can smell no sweetness in the great captain's return to virtue in the second day's battle. The ranting speeches of the hero before his attempted suicide are vitiated by memory of that sordid dereliction. No, the Battle of Actium is as much the critic's Waterloo as Antony's. But look upon Antony with new eyes, and "this man Is now become a god".

Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
Like a Colossus.

His Olympus is Alexandria, and there his pleasure lies. The Romans are gnats who buzz about his ears and irritate him into bestirring his mighty limbs for this petty conflict. Petulant, he goes into the battle; petulantly he will fight by water, not by land. With him goes his queen as to a pageant. The whole enterprise is fantastic and unreal, a puppet-show of senseless warfare. It is ridiculous thus to reënter a world of strife and bickering when near at hand is Alexandria with its ambrosial and godlike diversions. What! Cleopatra turns? She thinks so, too! Her sails are winging back to that metropolis of sports and pleasures, that garden of the gods? Ah, yes! She is right! And before he realizes what he has done—before judgment can reassert itself and accuse this dreamer for the fool he is—Antony has left the battle and lost it. He is a noble and tragic figure, this man who has believed himself a god—omnipotent, invulnerable—and who has lost his captainship, and love, and life itself because he has been true to his dream of an immortal happiness. After this catastrophe at Actium so viewed, how noble is Antony in the struggle to conquer his delusion and regain his captainship; how grandly affecting are his lamentations over lost greatness as he puts the sword to his own breast; how tragic is the loss of his love, his life, his reputation, and his godhead!

Is there anything in the play to contradict this interpretation of Antony's psychology? Of course, he has no sooner lost the Battle of Actium than a revulsion of Roman feeling sweeps over him. He sees himself now as the Romans must see him. And what more natural? That critic does not know his Shakespeare who would object that nothing—no signpost—has been put in the play to inform us that Antony is experiencing only a revulsion of feeling. The author of *Hamlet*, the creator of the world's conception of Cleopatra, is an expert in the logic of contraries. The revulsion, as it should be, is complete.

I have fled myself, and have instructed cowards
To run and show their shoulders... O!
I follow'd that I blush to look upon:
My very hairs do mutiny, for the white
Reprove the brown for rashness, and they them
For fear and doting... Friends... take the hint
Which my despair proclaims; let that be left
Which leaves itself...
Leave me, I pray, a little; pray you now:
Nay, do so; for, indeed, I have lost command.

The humiliation of seeing himself as Romans see him is bitter, and he sits down in utter despair and self-contempt.

Habituated to a stereotyped pattern of dramatic technique, reader and critic alike make the facile assumption that Antony now has seen, and is permitting us to see, his true self. With equal facility the early critics of *Hamlet* assumed that the main character, in speeches made, like Antony's, in moments of revulsion of feeling when the world's opinion seemed more authentic to him than his own, revealed the innermost reaches of his soul.

Oh, what a rogue and peasant slave am I?
Is it not monstrous that this player here...

All the violence the Devil might do to Scripture by quoting passages apart from their context to his purpose is not exceeded by the violence done to Shakespeare's plays by quoting characters piecemeal to their own damnation. If Hamlet is a peasant slave, it is not because he says so. Two marvels exist in Shakespearean criticism: no one has constructed a theory that Hamlet was actually a peasant, and no one has plucked out the heart of Hamlet's mystery by observing that Claudius serves the function of a Greek chorus in commenting upon the actions of the hero. How pertinent the remarks of such a functionary may be to the interpretation of a play I shall illustrate from Enobarbus. He tells us, for instance, that Antony's captainship at Actium was nicked by the itch of his affection for Cleopatra. The critics, in consequence, are enabled to understand Antony at Actium. Caesar it was, Enobarbus opines, who subdued Antony's judgment as well as his armies. With clairvoyant shrewdness Enobarbus perceives that Cleopatra has deserted Antony for Caesar. Indeed, she confesses to Caesar's messenger that Caesar is a god. But Enobarbus' masterpiece of divination is in the perception that Antony is no longer worthy to be followed. Enobarbus has so much the habit of comment that he even choruses upon himself in the following lines:

Be witness to me, O thou blessed moon,
When men revolted shall upon record
Bear hateful memory, poor Enobarbus did
Before thy face repent!

Would it not be but a long-overdue courtesy for us to confess, after these three hundred years, that Enobarbus is himself a critic, the

first of the long line of commentators upon the play in which he appears? He would, I am sure, have approved this mode of reasoning: Antony was a Roman; therefore, when he saw himself as a Roman, he saw himself truly; hence, after the Battle of Actium, he saw himself truly!

But if I am to be thus skeptical about the credulities of the critics, let me be also credulous about their skepticisms. Let me believe with some of them that Cleopatra would not have killed herself for loss of Antony, and with others that Antony after Actium was only the husk of a noble Roman. Let us all sneer at the ranting on the lips of a doomed libertine, scorn the cowardice of his suicide when no hope was left, and discount utterly his dying words:

The miserable change now at my end
Lament nor sorrow at; but please your thoughts
In feeding them with those my former fortunes
Wherein I liv'd, the greatest prince o' the world,
The noblest; and do now not basely die,
Not cowardly put off my helmet to
My countryman; a Roman by a Roman
Valiantly vanquished. Now my spirit is going;
I can no more.

Antony can no more; that is his last speech. I have called him a Janus in Alexandria, but not with the intention of painting one of his faces with its lips writhed into a sensuous leer. One face is that of a man, a great Roman captain; the other, that of a god, Jove-like rather than Egyptian, although his Olympus is Alexandria. These faces are portals to the mind within. When one is animated, the other stiffens into a lifeless mask. At Actium, both faintly gleamed with half-lights of the soul; then remembrance of deity flooded the Jove-like countenance with a divine radiance which left the face of the Roman captain chiseled and cold. After Actium, the godlike radiance ebbed, and was transmuted in the Roman visage to mortal hues of anguish and despair. Is the picture fantastic?

IV

Symbolisms prove nothing. Analogies prove nothing. I am not concerned, however, to prove the validity of the theory I am advancing, but only to make the basis of it clear. Proof of its validity would necessitate a critical review of every speech and incident

in the play. I must content myself for the present with reviewing only the first scene of *Antony and Cleopatra* in detail, and with a summary application of the theory to the major actions of the succeeding story. The first scene of the play, as sometimes elsewhere in Shakespeare, contains in epitome the major conflicts of the plot, and consequently offers in brief compass a rich field for application of the theory, witness the opening speech.

Philo, talking to Demetrius, enters a room of Cleopatra's palace.

Nay, but this dotage of our general's
O'erflows the measure; those his goodly eyes,
That o'er the files and musters of the war
Have glow'd like plated Mars, now bend, now turn
The office and devotion of their view
Upon a tawny front; his captain's heart,
Which in the scuffles of great fights hath burst
The buckles on his breast, reneges all temper,
And is become the bellows and the fan
To cool a gypsy's lust. Look! where they come.

Flourish. Enter Antony and Cleopatra, with their Trains; Eunuchs fanning her.

Take but good note, and you shall see in him
The triple pillar of the world transform'd
Into a strumpet's fool; behold and see.

There is the Roman view, which Antony himself, in captainlike moments, would acknowledge to be just. But for the present he is in good humor with his Egyptian kingdom and his queen. It is easy for Cleopatra to draw him into a vein of compliment.

Cleopatra If it be love indeed, tell me how much.
Antony There's beggary in the love that can be reckon'd.
Cleopatra I'll set a bourn how far to be belov'd.
Antony Then must thou needs find out new heaven, new earth.

But these pleasantries are interrupted by the entrance of an attendant.

Attendant News, my good lord, from Rome.

This is the world intruding. Antony's reply is significant.

Antony Grates me; the sum.

How irksome it is to put off godhood and face a Roman world of harsh realities! He will have the sum of the message in a word or two, that he may return to his godhood. But Cleopatra will tease.

Cleopatra Nay, hear them, Antony:
 Fulvia, perchance, is angry; or, who knows
 If the scarce-bearded Caesar have not sent
 His powerful mandate to you, 'Do this, or this;
 Take in that kingdom, and enfranchise that;
 Perform't, or else we damn thee.'
Antony How, my love;
Cleopatra Perchance! nay, and most like;
 You must not stay here longer; your dismissal
 Is come from Caesar; therefore hear it, Antony.
 Where's Fulvia's process? Caesar's I would say? both?
 Call in the messengers. As I am Egypt's queen,
 Thou blushest, Antony, and that blood of thine
 Is Caesar's homager; else so thy cheek pays shame
 When shrill-tongu'd Fulvia scolds. The messengers!

Antony understands this fooling, and it fits his humor. It is an invitation to resume the god.

Antony Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch
 Of the rang'd empire fall! Here is my space.
 Kingdoms are clay; our dungy earth alike
 Feeds beast as man; the nobleness of life
 Is to do thus [embracing]; when such a mutual pair
 And such a twain can do it, in which I bind,
 On pain of punishment, the world to weet
 We stand up peerless.

This is the Alexandrian key in which Antony loves to play.

Cleopatra Excellent falsehood!
 Why did he marry Fulvia and not love her?
 I'll seem the fool I am not; Antony
 Will be himself.
Antony But stirred by Cleopatra.
 Now for the love of Love and her soft hours,
 Let's not confound the time with conference harsh:

And here Antony speaks two lines which, if I interpret his psychology aright, are central to his Alexandrian mood.

There's not a minute of our lives should stretch
 Without some pleasure now. What sport tonight?
Cleopatra Hear the ambassadors.
Antony Fie, wrangling queen!
 Whom every thing becomes, to chide, to laugh,
 To weep; whose every passion fully strives
 To make itself, in thee, fair and admir'd.
 No messenger, but thine; and all alone,
 Tonight we'll wander through the streets and note
 The qualities of people. Come, my queen;
 Last night you did desire it: speak not to us.

Exeunt Antony and Cleopatra with their Alexandrian train, and the Roman messengers must await their summons. The scene ends with the Roman comment of Demetrius and Philo.

Demetrius Is Caesar with Antonius priz'd so slight?
Philo Sir, sometimes, when he is not Antony [i. e., not a Roman]
 He comes too short of that great property
 Which still should go with Antony.

Demetrius I am full sorry
 That he approves the common liar, who
 Thus speaks of him at Rome; but I will hope
 Of better deeds tomorrow. Rest you happy!

Is it not true that in this scene the conflicts of the play are epitomized? Demetrius and Philo are spokesmen for the opinion of the Roman world. Cleopatra is bent on keeping to herself her captain of men. The threat of Caesar's power is suggested by the presence of his messengers. Antony will see himself independent of Rome and of Caesar, free to follow his love and his pleasure. He is easy and happy in his imagined omnipotence. The coming of the messenger shocks him out of perfect confidence in his unshakable destiny. Consequently the announcement of news from Rome grates upon his serenity. He cannot, all in a moment, come down from his godlike heights, and he rants magnificently in his Alexandrian vein. But great events are brewing. Fulvia has fought a losing war with Caesar, and on the heels of this news will come the news of her death. Labienus has won victories in Asia; Sextus Pompeius has given the dare to Caesar, and commands the empire of the sea. On the morrow, when Antony has heard of these Roman wars and of Fulvia's death, a Roman thought will strike him, and he will be no more disposed to mirth.

"He was disposed to mirth; but on the sudden A Roman thought hath struck him." A point which in a longer paper would deserve extended development is the fact that in general Antony's mirthful thoughts are coincident with his moments of the delusion of grandeur. The god-face of this Janus is happier than the captain-face. But I must forbear elaboration of this remark, and must likewise pass over in reluctant silence the magic scene of Antony's parting with Cleopatra, with Cleopatra's exquisite coquetry dissolving into speeches of heart-deep passion. I must leave to your unaided memories the thousand touches of human insight that enrich this play from scene to scene.

The main sweep of events must be fronted with the countenance of a Roman. Reluctant, Antony turns to the political strife of his Roman sojourn, with its haggling over kingdoms. Reluctant, he

puts by the scepter of a god and absents himself from the queen of his fading destinies. In Rome, Caesar is speaking contemptuously of him, and in Messina, Pompey, too, is hoping that Cleopatra will "tie up the libertine in a field of feasts"; but they fear the old lion still. When Pompey hears that Antony is on his way to Rome, he pays a tribute to past deeds.

I could have given less matter
A better ear. Menas, I did not think
This amorous surfeiter would have donned his helm
For such a petty war; his soldiership
Is twice the other twain. But let us rear
The higher our opinion, that our stirring
Can from the lap of Egypt's widow pluck
The ne'er-lust-wearied Antony.

But he plucks, too, the string that all the world is plucking: "the ne'er-lust-wearied Antony." It is an evidence of Shakespeare's great mastery in dramatic presentation that he does not at any point insist upon the fact that Demetrius, and Philo, and Pompey, and Caesar, and at times Enobarbus, and at times even Antony himself, when they speak out the view of the Roman world upon Antony's conduct, are speaking only for themselves as Romans. Whether they are right or not is no business for interpretation by the dramatist, but the concern, if they wish to make it such, of the audience, or the reader, or the critic.

Now, Antony comes to Rome in the humor of a statesman. He has put on his captain's face. With manly forbearance he appeases the wrath of Caesar's first speeches. Well grasping the political advantages of the match with Octavia, he pledges himself unhesitatingly to it. He is reluctant to fight Pompey, who has laid great favors upon him, but he plumbs the chances of such a war with soldierlike questions. He urges the marriage with Octavia, to whom he promises good faith. Thus far the Roman. But when the soothsayer forecasts the fatal ascendancy of Caesar's star over his own, the Roman eagle-glance flickers, and from the lips of the Alexandrian god fall these words:

I will to Egypt;
And though I make this marriage for my peace,
I' the east my pleasure lies.

And these lines are but a complement to those other lines, also previously quoted,

There's not a minute of our lives should stretch
Without some pleasure now.

Yet the eagle-glance has only flickered, not failed. Antony is a statesman at Misenum and aboard Pompey's galley off that port. From the treaty he keeps firm pace to Rome for his marriage. At Athens, however, with Octavia, having no stomach for Caesar's slights upon his reputation, he threatens a war which would pit Octavia's husband against her brother. When guileless Octavia, as an emissary in the cause of peace, departs for Rome, the wings of the Alexandrian god are fluttering at Antony's shoulders. The fatal transformation alters the Janus-faces.

What has Antony done? He has doffed the Roman; resumed the god. Let Caesar tell the manner of it.

Caesar I' the market place, on a tribunal silver'd,
Cleopatra and himself in chairs of gold
Were publicly enthroned; at the feet sat
Caesarion, whom they call my father's son,
And all the unlawful issue that their lust
Since then hath made between them. Unto her
He gave the 'stablishment of Egypt; made her
Of Lower Syria, Cyprus, Lydia,
Absolute queen.

Mecænas This in the public eye?
Caesar I' the common showplace, where they exercise.
His sons he there proclaim'd the kings of kings;
Great Media, Parthia, and Armenia
He gave to Alexander; to Ptolemy he assign'd
Syria, Cilicia, and Phoenicia. She
In the habiliments of the goddess Isis
That day appear'd; and oft before gave audience,
As 'tis reported, so.

Yes, what has Antony done? He has returned to his omnipotence, that his sons may be kings of kings, and that his queen may be regal indeed. He is

levying

The kings o' the earth for war. He hath assembled
Bocchus, the King of Libya; Archelaus
Of Cappadocia; Philadelphos, King
Of Paphlagonia; the Thracian King, Adallas;
King Malchus of Arabia; King of Pont;
Herod of Jewry; Mithridates, King
Of Comagene; Polemon and Amintas,
The Kings of Mede and Lycaonia,
With a more larger list of sceptres.

His grandeur delusion, then, is not all illusion; he has kings at his

command. But does he think himself a god? Is he greater than Caesar, that he flouts him thus?

V

The rest of the play is a struggle of mighty opposites as a prelude to the incomparable death-scenes. Caesar makes war on Pompey, imprisons Lepidus; Pompey is murdered; and before Antony can imagine that it is possible, Caesar has cut the Ionian sea and taken in Toryne. Antony's godhood totters, but he clings to it so desperately as to nick his captainship. He is whirled into the war, and only half a captain, he elects to fight by sea. The Battle of Actium passes before his eyes like an apparition, and he wakes to find himself disgraced. Too late he becomes again the Roman; he will never regain either his invincibility in war or his magnificence in peace. So far is his soldiership at fault that he can propose personal combat to the triumphant Caesar. Enobarbus mocks him (in an aside) for a very fool, but Antony is not here a fool—simply a noble soul, a great heart, trying to win back to his captainship.

"I am dying, Egypt, dying." All that is needed to put those death-scenes at the head of high poetic tragedy is a noble Antony, a man whom we can respect in his misfortunes. Such an Antony I believe to have been in Shakespeare's mind when he penned the scenes. The play is great tragedy, of scope far beyond that of a mere love-romance between libertines. Antony is an unmeditative, unreflective Hamlet. Is not *Antony and Cleopatra*, as I have said before, the story of a man and a woman dragged from the summit of material happiness? Is the pity of it not in the fatal evanescence of even the most magnificent of earthly joys and triumphs? The splendid pageantry of the drama, its piercing love-theme, its gigantic clashes of tramping armies, its portrayal of the tortured courage of a soul drawn this way and that as Fate snatches at a hard-won divinity—do not all these elements, not for their own sakes but as they are woven together in a web of unparalleled gorgeousness and color, constitute tragedy on the grand scale, high tragedy, great tragedy? Thus, at any rate, with awe and gratitude, do I read this Shakespearean tragedy of those all-fortunate, yet ill-starred lovers, Antony and Cleopatra.

by James G. Southworth

HUGH MAC DIARMID

WITHIN recent years poetry has again swung decidedly to the left.¹ So marked is this tendency that it is in danger of becoming a literary pose rather than the expression of a passionate conviction. In England, the movement is understandable because of two dominant factors: the first and most important is the sudden awakening of the young intellectual to the conditions of the laboring classes brought about by the general strike of 1926 when, for the first time, he was brought into contact with reality; the second is the impetus to this awakened sensibility given by D. H. Lawrence. In Scotland, too, the movement has found its interpreter in the work of the ardent and impassioned nationalist, Mr. Hugh Mac Diarmid,² who, through the medium of metrical language in Scots dialect and in English, has given expression to his wide range of interests. Mr. Mac Diarmid is at present, I believe, known but to a comparatively small circle of American readers; and the fault is largely his own that that circle is not wider. The subject matter of his poetry is provocative and substantial, and in his more recent work the expression is straightforward and simple in an easily understood idiom. But the extreme use of an esoteric dialect in his earlier volumes obscured the essential simplicity of many lyrics and made difficult the apprehension of the philosophic nature of such a work as *Circumjack Cencrastus*.³ Compared with his Southern neighbor

¹I say "again" advisedly. Had the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had the same predilection for the word "left" as we, they certainly would have applied it to the newer romantic poetry of the day.

²Mr. C. M. Grieve has progressively spelt his pen name M'Diarmid, McDiarmid, and Mac Diarmid.

³The general reader would do well to make his first acquaintance with Mr. Mac Diarmid through the volume *Second Hymn to Lenin and Other Poems*, and follow it with Mr. Mac Diarmid's own selection of his earlier poems. He can then fill in the gaps as he becomes more familiar with his mode of communication. The following is a partial bibliography: *Sangschaw* (1925); *Penny Wheep* (1926); *The Lucky Bag* (?); *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle* (?);

the Scots Lowlander has always been less imaginative and more philosophic. He has exalted the powers of reason. Mr. Mac Diarmid is no exception. His poetry not only teems with ideas stimulated by a close knowledge of the British as well as the continental philosophers, but reveals the poet philosophizing on his own profession. Too many times, however, he forgets his duty as a poet and his expression becomes matter-of-fact. He fails to communicate to the reader the enthusiasm which the idea probably aroused in him. With his predilection for philosophy, it is not strange, therefore, to find that in his poetry he has developed at considerable length his conception of the function of a poet, that he has beaten out his own personal philosophy, crystallizing the distilled essence of a moment realized in love of nature, in addition to having presented his strong convictions on politics, religion, patriotism, and nationalism.

Differing markedly from the intuitive D. H. Lawrence, Mr. Mac Diarmid likes thought. He likes poems that are dry and hard;—and not those which, suiting the general taste, are “fozy wi’ infinity”. Thought is attractive to him because it leads to the only things worth having. It has, moreover, kept him from the belief that the best way of life is that of him who in the material processes of life lays waste his powers. As he remarks in “De Profundis”, and even more forcefully in “Folly”, the wise man is the one whom the world frequently takes to be the fool. He has chosen to *live*, whereas the majority in the world have spent “their lives wasting their reasons for living.” Most persons are apathetic until something stirs them from their lethargy, even though that something might have to be death (“Salmon Leap”).

Thought has also led him to explore the paradox of genius, the unexplainable. Extending the basic idea of Shelley’s “Hymn to Intellectual Beauty”, he expresses the need of a “technique for genius”, because, as matters now stand, we cannot tell from whence it will spring—certainly good birth is no criterion (“The Burning Passion”). Or, failing that, we need to find a means whereby all that genius has accomplished will be the starting point of all men’s lives. The inadequacy of language to commun-

To Circumjack Cencrastus (1930); *First Hymn to Lenin and Other Poems* (1931); *Scots Unbound* (1932); *Stony Limits and Other Poems* (1934); *Selected Poems* (1934); *Second Hymn to Lenin, etc.* (1935).

icate a truly mystical experience presents a serious obstacle to such an accomplishment. The mind of man can create no ideas although "it is ideas alone that create". Or, expressed more clearly in the final stanza of "Birth of a Genius Among Men", he mentions how, while lying awake, he

... heard the faint voices of them discuss
The way in which they could only express themselves yet
In fragmentary and fallacious forms through us,

an idea which bears a startling resemblance to Protagoras' belief that 'man is the measure of things'.

Although he will not pander to the popular taste, Mr. Mac Diarmid has little patience with those poets who do not write for the masses of men or who are content to copy the themes used by their predecessors. Poets cannot produce great work and at the same time surrender to the crowd. If their work is to be worth reading, they must think for themselves, not be content to work over the notions of "slaverin' savages". Since ours is "a frenzied and chaotic age", it becomes increasingly necessary to find "men capable of rejecting all that other men think, as a stone remains the essential to the world, inseparable from it". In regard to themselves, however, Mr. Mac Diarmid believes that "maist men are prehistoric still!" In this group he places some of the great Victorians as well as Goethe who, since he did not get beneath the surface of life, has no message for mankind; he lacks universality.

To his statement that the soul has a right to change according to its impacts, impacts which preclude the possibility of a poet's dwelling in an ivory tower, no one will object. Nor will he, however, find anything particularly new in such an idea. How is growth measured but by the changing soul? That poetry no longer holds the exalted place in man's life that it once did, he would be the first to admit. Or, expressed differently, "Nature never abandoned a fairer aince-mair-promisin' field". Although poetry as embodied in particular poems does not seem to be permanent—like a life that is lived bravely for a moment and then goes "away to the void again"—it only seems so because we ourselves are so temporary.

"Soul" is a dangerous word. It, too, is fozy wi' infinity.

Such are some of his general ideas about poetry. In particular it should be the property of the man in the street; it should concern itself with "real ends", i. e. vital problems, because it would then be the world's greatest force for good; it should get to the very essence of the thing; it must be the result of an examination of all phases of life with which the poet has closely associated himself in order that it will be understanding. In other words, poetry should carry us as far as it can beyond nature and the common man: it should carry us towards an ultimate goal which now seems like the ideal.

Mr. Mac Diarmid, although not interested in personal glory, wishes for his own poetry that it might arouse his race, that through it the world might find an outlet for what it has long been seeking. He is aware, however, that something within him is missing that will make possible such an achievement. In his youth he experienced sensations akin to those of Wordsworth in "Tintern Abbey". Earlier, nature haunted him like a passion; then he changed. Regretfully he admits that he has fallen short of his goal, because although possessed of a live and passionate thought he has been unable to communicate it to the world. In theory Mr. Mac Diarmid's conception of poetry differs little from that of Wordsworth or Matthew Arnold. He realizes that a poem must not primarily be direct propaganda. One golden lyric is of more value than the solution of a particular social problem because it makes men less like apes and is a beacon light to the leaders, although "they're owre blin' to see it".

II

I have no quarrel with Mr. Mac Diarmid's general conception of the poet and poetry, or with his particular pronouncements. It is his application of these tenets that challenges the reader of his work.* First, however, let us pursue our examination of the subject matter before attempting an evaluation of his aesthetic achievement.

Patriotism, for example, is no empty flag-waving pseudo-patri-

*I have perhaps given too detailed a treatment of his pronouncements, and yet from the frequency and the exhaustive treatment of this subject in his poetry it is evident that the problem is one of his vital concerns.

otism blinding him to his country's faults. It is a conviction that springs from his love of the very starkness of the Scottish landscape, one whose infinite variety cannot be described in English words, a variety, however, with a basic unity like that which he hopes underlies his own work, a basic unity or spirit that he wishes his countrymen to understand. He reveals this aspect of his patriotism in "The Little White Rose", and even more forcefully in the much longer "Water Music". The reverse side of this aspect is his bitterness towards those Scotsmen—expatriated or not—who speak of their love for Scotland and yet passively see her decay. Among such are those of the nobility who spend their substance in London, many ecclesiastics who have lost the spirit of Christ, and selfish politicians. Those who have most profited from her have been her betrayers. The presence of tenements, hunger, and uncultivated land attest the little that has been done in the past hundred years. But not only have the leaders betrayed her! Ninety percent of her sons have likewise done so. Since much of the degradation of Scotland has resulted from her union with England—when the Scots exchanged the great music of the bagpipes for the English hurdy-gurdy—the only cure lies in separation. He is, and he urges his fellow-countrymen to be, strong nationalists. No one can serve Scotland "without muckle trial and trouble to himsel".*

Inasmuch as Mr. Mac Diarmid carries his convictions to the point of a religious fervor it is little wonder that he finds little spiritual companionship among his relatives. A prophet is perforce a nuisance to his own family. The love-religion, he declares, has nowhere had a harder struggle than in Scotland, whose people, unfortunately, have fought in all the sham fights of the world, but have not fought the more important fight with themselves. Until they do, however, there is no hope for them, nor can there be anything in common between him and his countrymen. In his "Lament for the Great Music" he not only urges the Scotsman to carry on his great tradition of culture, but makes a natural transition from the more immediate aspect of his patri-

*This aspect of his patriotism is, according to one of my Scottish friends, the sentimental reactions of a typical Highlander. It is the Lowlander that is the practical person. According to such a classification Mr. Mac Diarmid would seem to be a combination of both elements.

otism to its larger aspect as manifested in the following pronouncement of his political ideology:

I am horrified by the triviality of life, by its corruption and helplessness,
 No prospect of eternal life, no fullness of existence, no love without betrayal,
 No passion without satiety. Yet life could be beautiful even now.
 But all is soiled under philistine rule...

Yet there is no great problem in the world to-day
 Except disease and death men cannot end
 If no man tries to dominate another.

He disagrees with those economists who believe that the traditional economics is the only valid system. He is at odds with those religionists who in order to maintain the *status quo* present the concept of an anthropomorphic God. He bolsters his position in the straightforward "First Objectives" by voicing his determination to eliminate class distinctions, war, capitalism, the church—all those things, in other words, that repress rather than point the way to a fuller life. That person who admonishes us to "hold—have a care", and who thereby prevents us from experiencing the soul quality of enjoying the "divine in human or human in divine" is our natural enemy. He is everywhere about us; he is the upholder of a wrong concept of the aims of man and of the universe. The glory of mankind lies today where it has ever lain—in the goodness, simplicity, and patience of the vast majority of persons. Man can have what he wants and what is his due if he will only free himself from the antiquated concept of economics and will realize that his class, not the so-called upper classes, possesses the power. In fact, the life-force needs the lowly things if it needs anything at all. It has little use for those of the idle leisure class.

Mr. Mac Diarmid is indignant at those who toady to royalty and is vitriolic against the abuses of capitalism. If to insist upon every man's right to the physical and spiritual values of life be communistic, then he is an ardent communist. Like most of the young poets and some of the so-called radical leaders he believes that *laissez faire* is a thing of the past and that equality of opportunity must be provided for all. His admiration for Lenin lies in Lenin's insistence upon such a concept. In spite of any

criticism that might be levelled against Lenin's methods, the fundamental fact remains that it is the thing done that counts, not how it is done. Had not the powers of Life and Thought been misused for the many, Lenin's methods would have been unnecessary. With a man's work to do Lenin behaved like a man and not like a child as most of us have been doing. After all, what does it matter whom we kill if it will "lessen the foulest murder that deprives maist men of real lives"?

Mr. Mac Diarmid has little patience with bibliolaters or with those who cloak love and religion in mysteries. The two are "naked and unashamed", and should be so treated. Why deny them, or why defame them? The Scotch religion particularly, with its traditional gloominess, is a woesome sight devoid of vitality. Like so much formal religion it has denied the principles of Christ. Most of the so-called professing Christians—like the church itself—are greedy and self-seeking. They find smugness in the belief of Christ's sacrifice for mankind. Such fools are ever ready to give their opinions on God, life, death, and other mysteries. It is only the wise man who, aware of his own limitations, is willing to postpone all such thoughts. Why, he asks, be anxious about the future? Anyone who has come "from sperm to maturity" has undergone so many changes that he need fear no more; his limits are determined by himself. Mr. Mac Diarmid, himself a great admirer of Christ, is essentially a mystic in his approach to the problem of God, and believes that truths greater than rationalistic ones spring from the subconscious mind. "A Dog's Life" and "An Apprentice Angel" are interesting side-lights on his general thought.

He realizes that where there is too much talk about souls and God there is apt to be too little of the real spirit. "Prayer for a Second Flood", like so many of his poems with a religious cast, is essentially political in essence. It is a plea for a broader humanity. A striking quality of contemporary poetry is, in fact, the spirit of revolt from a religion whose essence is form and whose priests constitute a hierarchy of privilege in favor of a practical application of the golden rule. I do not believe that the average American reader has any conception of the thoughtful young Britisher's attitude towards the Established Church.

Mr. Mac Diarmid is aware, as many of his fellow enthusiasts are not, but as D. H. Lawrence certainly was, that it is almost impossible for the intellectual to become one with the working classes. Theoretically, one can talk about becoming one, but their body smells, their insensitivity, and their coarseness frequently repel the would-be fraterniser. But no vicarious living among them is possible. The artist must go beyond the border line to the actual association. At present Mr. Mac Diarmid thinks that Russia probably provides the best opportunities for intimate contacts with the masses. A direct contact is, of course, often disillusioning to the idealist, but only by direct contact can one learn to understand the masses. Mr. Eliot's failure to follow Mr. Mac Diarmid's suggestion is the cause of the fundamental falsity of many of the Sweeney poems, as well as of a large bulk of "The Waste Land".

Mr. Mac Diarmid is not so much an idealist or wishful thinker that he holds the workers themselves blameless. He realizes, as did D. H. Lawrence, that the conditions of the workers are "due mainly to their ain mob cowardice"; that the workers are decidedly *not* inherently noble; that even with every opportunity for a full life they do not know how to grasp it; that they are not as equal to life as they are to the machines they tend; and that did they make a concerted effort they could achieve a change in a short time. In "Reflections in an Ironworks" it is almost as if D. H. Lawrence himself were speaking:

Would you resembled the metal you work with,
Would the iron entered into your souls,
Would you became like steel on your own behalf!
You are still only putty that tyranny rolls
Between its fingers! You makers of bayonets and guns
For your own destruction! No wonder that those
Weapons you make turn on you and mangle and murder—
You fools who equip your otherwise helpless foes!

Mr. Mac Diarmid also echoes Lawrence in the lesson to be derived from this knowledge. We must not have our work as the end-all; rather, we should be constantly striving not only to discover the meaning of life, but to find ways of bringing greater significance to it. We must not expect too much from the masses until we free them from the necessity of submitting to a regimen for the sake of their daily bread. But we cannot expect too much

from the "haves", because those whose ancestors came by their wealth dishonestly "are aye strang on the law". Mr. Mac Diarmid understands their position, but regrets it. Were man free from the tradition which has not only enslaved him in the past, but enslaves him now, he could attain far greater heights than are at present possible. He could understand life as he cannot now do, because he would open the way for greater experiences, the source of a knowledge of life:

Nae man can ken his hert until
The tide o' life uncovers it,
And horror-struck he sees a pit
Returnin' life can never fill.

Unfortunately, however, no evolution in self-knowledge has occurred: the essential life of mankind in the mass is still the same as that of their earliest ancestors. In all other fields the world's ideas up to those of three hundred years ago have been discarded. Would man only realize that did the methods in mental advance approach those for material achievement the rewards might possibly be as great! But the poor public will swallow anything as long as it is sugar-coated!

Self-knowledge and an understanding of the meaning of life are frequent themes in Mr. Mac Diarmid's poetry. We must learn our lessons from the stones which alone are immutable. After all:

What happens to us
Is irrelevant to the world's geology
But what happens to the world's geology
Is not irrelevant to us.

In fact, self-knowledge can come only from an intimate contact with life and with death. "A man never faced wi' death," he says, "kens nocht of life." The prostitute enlists his sympathy as she has that of so many poets. To him as to them she is a symbol rather than a person. By serving Man, not merely a man, she has a greater place than a sweetheart, wife, or mother, because unlike them she cannot shut her life to Life. "O Wha's Been Here Afore Me, Lass" presents another aspect of the same problem.* Once man has reached the limits of self-knowledge he

*This tendency to view life and death as complementary probably derives from his reading of Rainer Maria Rilke.

*The poems in this *genre* bear a striking resemblance to many by Hardy.

must have the courage to make his world on the basis of his discovery in spite of the jeers of others. Only then can he hope to extend the process of self-knowledge to new limits.

Although he does not treat love as a routine subject, Mr. Mac Diarmid does not neglect it. Many beautiful lyrics in the early volumes and occasional ones in the later volumes reveal tenderness, passion, and understanding. A mother's love which not only differs markedly from that of a father, but reveals an essential quality of woman, is the subject of "The Two Parents". A mother's love, even towards a child born out of wedlock, can bring more joy than sorrow. "The Robber", for example, tells the same story as told by Hardy in "The Dark-Eyed Gentleman".

III

Interesting, however, as is the subject matter of a poet, its importance lies not only in the obvious control which it exercises on the music of the verse, but also in the subtlety it lends to certain aspects of that music. No poem has ever survived solely because of its intellectual content, whereas many poems of little or no intellectual content have achieved immortality. Some of Shakespeare's lyrics should quiet the sceptic. Let us look, therefore, at those aspects of Mr. Mac Diarmid's work which will determine his position as a poet.

I have already mentioned that Mr. Mac Diarmid writes both in Scots dialect and in English, the former predominating in the earlier volumes and the latter elsewhere. His Scots dialect is of no one locality as Burns' was that of Ayrshire; but he selects, according to Mr. John Buchan, "where he pleases between Aberdeen and the Cheviots". This boldness has made many of the pieces difficult for the reader. Moreover, and this was to be expected of a man using a new weapon, he has often failed. No one likes to have constant recourse to a glossary; and even then, those he provides are incomplete. The general idea of the poem is clear enough, but an accurate perception of the poet's intention is impossible. The reader is left unsatisfied. I do not mean to give the impression that he always is. Were it so, there would be no meaning to the present essay. "The Watergaw", "The Bonnie Broukit Bairn", "Water Music", "Wheesht, Wheesht", the de-

lightly satiric "Crowdieknowe", and innumerable others are undoubted successes. Unlike Burns, Mr. Mac Diarmid can write in English with the same force, often with greater, than in Scots. "The Herd of Does", for example, has all the lyric intensity of any of the dialect poems. By tending to simplify his Scots diction in his later volumes I think Mr. Mac Diarmid will win a wider circle of readers than was before possible.

A second characteristic that troubles the American reader is the frequent ornateness and heavy latinity of his diction. The Scots have always had a predilection for rhetoric, and no less a scholar than Professor Nichol Smith of Oxford, himself a Scotsman, has remarked of the Scots' delight in using erudite words.* As a matter of fact, it is frequently impossible to believe that Mr. Mac Diarmid can be serious. Instead of a preponderance of monosyllables, polysyllabic words abound. The objection to this practice is not on account of the length of the words, but on account of the faulty communication that results. Not only is the basic or traditional rhythm of English poetry disturbed, but these aureate words carry for us no emotional connotation derived from past associations; no more, in fact, than do the unfamiliar Scots words of literary origin. In "Vestigia Nulla Retrorsum (In Memoriam: Rainer Maria Rilke 1875-1926)" at least thirty-seven strange words confront even an enlightened reader.¹⁰ What

*"To the present day the Scottish student dearly loves a well-rounded resounding sentence... We are apt to forget the large place occupied by Latin in vernacular Scots. Latin was at one time as familiar to the educated Scot as his mother-tongue, and was his means of communication with foreigners. The Scot abroad made his way with Latin. The Scottish authors who were known abroad wrote in Latin. Scots Law, which is founded on Roman Law, has a larger Latin element than English Law. Latin words were bound to creep into the vernacular. More than that, Latin words have come into English from Scottish usage." *Some Aspects of Eighteenth Century Poetry*.

¹⁰The following are a few: Halophilous, cleistogamic, abreption, abderian, accidie, gynandromorphic, lectisternium, immarcescible, and laevorotatory. One stanza will illustrate the difficulty:

In shades of lastery and filemot and gridelin,
Stammel and perse, our chesil and turbary lie
Far from Scotland, that land of liripoops we left
On these sterile stones, all else bereft,
To watch the lacertine gleams, the lightning hummers, still.
Nature with her excessive being no more could come
Over us here, we thought, as prophecy over Paul;
Lagophthalmic as God himself we yet descry
Overwhelming nimiety in this minimum!

happens is, of course, the complete loss of lyricism in such passages. "Ephyphatha", stressing the alliteration on 'p' and 'f', is another instance in kind. Perhaps to the Scottish ear the presence of such words does not present a bar to the musical pattern; but to an American ear the result differs little from the effect produced by an ultra-modern musical conception in a totally unfamiliar idiom. "Stony Limits" is a striking example of Mr. Mac Diarmid's practice. Written as a memorial to Charles Doughty (1843-1927), a man whose ways were different from those of the poet, it has a nobility which is enhanced by the images as well as by the sheer music of the verse; but again the learned diction jars on the ear of the reader accustomed to the diction of traditional English poetry. I am, of course, not concerned with the possible reaction of future generations to Mr. Mac Diarmid's aureate and erudite vocabulary. Fortunately, these experiments, because I do not think they can be anything more, are confined chiefly to *Stony Limits*. They do not reappear in *Second Hymn to Lenin and Other Poems*.

Mr. Mac Diarmid's figurative language transcends the merely picturesque. "Prayer for a Second Flood", a strongly satiric poem showing traces of what AE called "the sardonic rebel", contains figures that are unusual, striking, and keyed to the tone of the poem. Of the numerous Noahs of today who speak with confidence of the ways of the Lord, he says:

Ding a' their trumpery show to bauds again.
 Their measure is the thimblefu' o' Esk in spate.
 Like whiskey the titlin' craturs mete oot your poo'ers
 Aince a week for 'baubees in the kirk-door plate,
 —And pit their umbrellas up when they come oot
 If mair than a pulpitu' o' You's aboot!

The imagery in "At My Father's Grave" is likewise arresting:

The sunlict still on me, you row'd in clood,
 We look upon each ither noo like hills
 Across the valley. I'm nae mair your son.
 It is my mind, nae son o' yours, that looks
 And the great darkness o' your death comes up
 And equals it across the way.
 A livin' man upon a deid man thinks
 And ony sma'er thocht's impossible.

But in spite of his insistence on thought Mr. Mac Diarmid realizes that some of the greatest experiences lie beyond the poet's ability to crystallize them in language. The true poet speaks in "As Lovers Do":

Here at the height of passion
As lovers do
I can only speak brokenly
Of trifles too.

Idiot incoherence
I know full well
Is the only language
That with God can deal.

But what he frequently fails to realize is that metrical dialectic is not poetry. He is so carried away by his convictions, so eager to raise the reader to his same pitch of intense emotion that he fails. Too often his verses communicate the sense of nervous energy without communicating the sense of passion. They have a matter-of-factness that disturbs the reader. One never doubts whether or not he has thought intensely about his matter; but one does doubt whether or not he has thought equally intensely about the dress of those thoughts. It seems to me that many poems are only prose broken up into a metrical pattern. It is possible, however, that he has not considered it worth his while to labor in polishing one thought when other thoughts were crowding his mind. But if that is true, I think he has seriously erred. Like Donne, he is interested in communicating the subtleties developing from his main idea rather than in making the main idea all powerful. No one can deny that Mr. Mac Diarmid is intellectually stimulating. He bludgeons the old orthodoxies with the club of a zealot and poses problems the solution of which demands of us our best.

IV

But I do not wish to leave the reader with the idea that he is incapable of genuine song. I have already mentioned several fine lyrics. Stately music and searching thought combine in "On a Raised Beach". The nightingale lyric in "Circumjack Cencrastus", "Dytiscus", and the "Ballad of Five Senses", to mention but a few, attain a high level of achievement. They are no less

thoughtful than his other poems, but they present Mr. Mac Diarmid as a thinker *and* a poet.

Several factors conspire to prevent Mr. Mac Diarmid from achieving popularity in America in the way that Messrs. Auden, Spender, McNeice, and Day Lewis have achieved it. His use of dialect is one; the hardness of his thought, his frequent matter-of-factness, and his refusal to seek popularity are others. He is willing to await the response to his poetry. It would, however, be an injustice to Mr. Mac Diarmid, as well as to the other men, to attempt to weigh one against the other. What Mr. Spender has said of himself is true, I believe, of every sincere poet: "One does not try to be greater or better than other writers, one is trying to be as truthful as one can and we should be judged by the limits of that truth set against the greater truth of others." The clothing of Mr. Mac Diarmid's thoughts bears no resemblance to that of the poets I have already mentioned—it is the difference between Harris tweed and West-of-England cloth. But the thoughts are frequently striking in their similarity. One thing is certain. To all classes with their increasing awareness to social problems and their revision of their views of life as science has pushed back the boundaries of the universe Mr. Mac Diarmid has much to say and he says it with force. One may cavil at individual poems, one may disagree violently with specific ideas; but when one lays aside the volumes of his work and thinks about his accomplishment one realizes he has been in the presence of a man of erudition steeped in the best thought of the past and the present if not always in the presence of a great poet; that he has been in the presence of a man who by sincerity of expression, by subtlety and keenness of intellect, and by indomitable energy has sought to fire his readers to an adequate perception of the universe, of our immediate world and its needs, and of their place therein.

by William S. Knickerbocker

JOHN DEWEY

"A man's mind is what he minds." —H. M. KALLEN.

*"Even the scholar is not safe: he too is searched and revised. . . .
The power of the mind is not mortification but life."*

—EMERSON.

*"It is less important that we all believe alike than that we all
alike inquire freely and put at the disposal of one another such
glimpses as we may obtain of the truth for which we are in search."*

—JOHN DEWEY.

IF Harvard's Alfred North Whitehead is right, the publication of *THE PHILOSOPHY OF JOHN DEWEY*¹ has timely significance. "For many generations," writes Mr. Whitehead, "the North American Continent will be the living center of human civilization. Thought and action will be derived from it, and refer to it. . . . John Dewey is the typical effective American thinker; and he is the chief intellectual force providing that environment with coherent purpose."

This new kind of symposium, published under the auspices of Northwestern University to celebrate John Dewey's eightieth birthday, should be immediately placed, for swift and constant accessibility, beside the earlier symposium on instrumentalism, *CREATIVE INTELLIGENCE* (Henry Holt & Co., 1925). John Dewey deserves such a beautiful and rewarding book. The public owes a debt of gratitude to its editor, Paul Arthur Schilpp, who inaugurates with it a new series (*THE LIBRARY OF LIVING PHILOSOPHERS*), and to the Carnegie Corporation, which assisted by providing funds for its publication. It consists of four parts: (1) a biography of the philosopher by his daughter, Jane M. Dewey; (2) seventeen descriptive and critical essays by as many distinguished living thinkers who assess different phases of Dewey's achievements; (3) John Dewey's refutation of his critics under

¹*THE PHILOSOPHY OF JOHN DEWEY*. Edited by Paul Arthur Schilpp, Northwestern University. *THE LIBRARY OF LIVING PHILOSOPHERS*. Volume 1. Evanston & Chicago: Northwestern University, 1939.

the title, "Experience, Knowledge and Value"; and (4) an exhaustive bibliography of Dewey's writings to October, 1939. While each of the four sections has its own value, magnificently contributing to a unified effect, Sections II and III immediately excite the present reviewer. The distinction between dialectic and forensic stimulus becomes clear as the disinterested reader compares the seventeen essays of Section II with each other, and educes from each what its author understood to be the purpose of the volume. The comparison yields some interesting results: The variety of the essays attests the liberality of the editor in respecting the integrity of each contributor. No protocol or program specifying rigorously the method, tone, and purport was imposed in order to secure unity of thrust and harmony of effect.

The table of contents handsomely distinguishes between two types of the seventeen essays: (1) Descriptive and (2) Critical. The first type expounds the Deweyan method by disciples, exponents, or admirers of John Dewey but, instructive and clarifying as the essays are, they surprise the expectant reader by their failure to *use* the Deweyan method of cultivated naïveté. (The more eulogistic Deweyites, like Professor Geiger, carry the naïveté beyond the permissible phase, by becoming somewhat evangelical.)

Professor Whitehead himself has some dark doubts about the efficacy of Mr. Dewey's total effectiveness and influence. By a fancy bit of artful-dodging, Mr. Whitehead hints at possible dangers to philosophic inquiry if Mr. Dewey's efforts are merely repeated by Mr. Dewey's disciples. "The final chapter of philosophy," says Mr. Whitehead, "consists in the search for the unexpressed pre-suppositions which underlie the beliefs of every finite human intellect. . . . The excellence of Dewey's work in the expression of notions relevant to modern civilization increases the danger of sterilizing thought within the puny limitations of today. . . . Philosophy should aim at disclosure beyond explicit suppositions. In this advance Dewey himself has done noble work."

Though John Dewey has a philosophical system, the system is the product of a method. It is the *method* which is important: not its products, which are subject to correction by use of the

method.⁴ If these products should be found incomplete or inadequate by philosophers, they may safely be entrusted to custodians of literature who may find in them qualities which illuminate the strength or weakness of the *milieu* which they express. Will the literary productions of John Dewey stand up under the scrutiny of literary analysts? So far as an erudite, honest, and responsive American can overcome the accretions and disciplinary deferences of an academic *milieu*, John Dewey may be an instance of an American Innocent acting intelligently in his world. He has not attempted to think as if he were the first man to think; but if he has succeeded in contributing a better way of thinking, he may be among American philosophers an Ezekiel surveying a valley of dried bones crying: "Can these bones live, O Lord?"

II

How do American philosophers think when they direct their minds upon some specific thinker and his thought?

One of the contributors to *THE PHILOSOPHY OF JOHN DEWEY*, Mr. Arthur Murphy, discerningly remarks: "The essays in this volume reflect the preconceptions and interpretative limitations of their authors at least as much as the actual content and implications of Mr. Dewey's philosophy."⁵ Mr. Murphy's observation suggests an unintended interest of the symposium, and might well be the subject of an essay. Three of the contributors (Whitehead, Russell, and Santayana) are impressed with the characteristically "American" aspects of Dewey's philosophy but, whereas Professor Whitehead brilliantly inhibits his own philosophy in rendering ceremonial homage to John Dewey, Messrs. Santayana and Bertrand Russell exploit the occasion of the symposium to restate their own philosophies at Mr. Dewey's expense. Though no two of the three philosophers cited agree in their interpretation of Dewey's function in revealing the American mind to itself, Dewey ironically disposes of Russell's and Santayana's assertions about American civilization and his function in symbolizing it.

⁴"... the word 'intelligence' represents what is essential in my work much better than does the word knowledge." John Dewey, *THE PHILOSOPHY OF JOHN DEWEY*, p. 539.

⁵*THE PHILOSOPHY OF JOHN DEWEY*, p. 195.

He does not, however, explicitly deny what Professor Whitehead asserted—that he (Dewey) is the typical effective American thinker. If he is “typical”, he may be unaware of his “typicality”. By a winning plainness of expression, he may indeed disclose one phase at least of the forces and directions of the American mind just because he has been naïvely responsive to the frontier, as distinguished from the settled and established, aspects of American culture.

Is John Dewey the “Innocent at Home”? Is he the obverse of Mark Twain’s “Innocent Abroad”? In an impressive series of books, Dewey has courageously recorded his contacts with an increasingly complicated native civilization; and has provided Americans, not ashamed of their obviously American ways of thinking-by-doing, with a mirror of their own minds. He has renounced a tendency, shown by some of his sophisticated countrymen, to what may facetiously be called “the diaspora” (in its most recent form known as “expatriation”) and has steadily declined easy comforts of eschatologies and apocalyptic flights. In his *organon* there is no teleological stuff-and-nonsense! Its absence makes his innocence conspicuous. In any survey of the contemporary American scene, he invites scrutiny as a kind of Will Rogers in philosophy. But to admit all this is not to consent to George Santayana’s description of John Dewey as the Protagonist of the American Dumb-bell:

The master-burden of his [Dewey’s] philosophy, which lends it its national character, is a profound sympathy with the enterprize of life in all lay directions, in its technical and moral complexity, and especially in its American form, where individual initiative, although still demanded and prized, is quickly subjected to overwhelming democratic control. This, if I am not mistaken, is the heart of Dewey’s pragmatism, it is the pragmatism of the people, dumb and instinctive in them, and struggling in him to a labored but radical expression He is not interested in speculation at all, balks at it, and would avoid it if he could: his inspiration in sheer fidelity to the task in hand and sympathy with the movement afoot: a deliberate and happy participation in the attitude of the American people, with its omnivorous human interests and its simplicity of purpose.⁴

⁴George Santayana: *THE PHILOSOPHY OF JOHN DEWEY*, pp. 247-248.

Mr. Santayana's charming essay (No. 8. "Dewey's Naturalistic Metaphysics") reveals more of Mr. Santayana than it does of Mr. Dewey. As one withdraws from its enticements, considering it coldly in some perspective, it produces an almost comic effect, because it guilelessly betrays Mr. Santayana's preoccupation and absorption in his own notion of philosophy as a soliloquy-in-continuum. One seems to see its fastidious author drowsily and momentarily lifting a reluctant eyelid while he utters exotic syllables to demonstrate that, however distantly and perhaps painfully, he is aware of Mr. Dewey's existence and activities. His syllables sound like murmurs from some infinite sea of eternal "essences". "... all I can hope to accomplish," are the groomed accents, "is to fix the place and character of this doctrine [viz. Dewey's naturalistic metaphysics] in relation to the points of view which I instinctively take [*sic!*] or which seem to me, on reflection, to be most comprehensive."⁸

Yet Mr. Santayana's "instinct" and "reflection" seem to have their deflection exposed when they are exercised on John Dewey, because one has Mr. Dewey's works at hand to corroborate or correct them. By allusive sinuosities, Mr. Santayana reduces a susceptible reader to abject and awed aphasia, but if a less docile reader can resist Mr. Santayana's spell, keeping his wits during the concert, he will discover that Mr. Santayana is really murmuring about America Thinking which Mr. Dewey conveniently symbolizes. The motet is clearly adagio with the theme: "Hence the implicit American philosophy, which it is Dewey's privilege to make explicit . . ." The essay, in other words, depicts John Dewey as the philosophic innocent who stayed-at-home when he might have gone to the market-place: hence, while Mr. Santayant has all the corned-beef, this little piggy has none.

Mr. Santayana has sedulously cultivated a Legend of himself as Philosopher Abroad. His philosophy, no less than his personal career, is a very convenient illustration of a discernible impulse in American restlessness. He has been faithful to his Legend of the Exquisite. He is the American Sophisticate, in all ways, always: an Exile by the waters of the American Babylon: an Expatriot even when he is at home. What makes his writings so alluring (apart from the more apparent musical virtuositities of

⁸THE PHILOSOPHY OF JOHN DEWEY, p. 245.

his style) is that he eminently displays the Ulysses-urge (a characteristically American propensity for passionate pilgrimages among the ruins of time). In that respect his work sharply contrasts with that of John Dewey who may fittingly represent for him the Penelope-urge (the middle-western disposition to sit rocking at home). If Santayana possesses what Dewey lacks—a literary style mined with detonating artifices—Dewey possesses what Santayana lacks—the patience to stay with a process of common human activity, of seeing more distinctly what lies within a narrower but more recognizable scope.*

Having for years catalogued his own philosophy as "naturalism", Mr. Santayana examines the two terms of Dewey's system which he arbitrarily (without confirmable warrant!) calls, depending upon a chance phrase used by Dewey: "naturalistic metaphysics". Perhaps the terms are not mutually contradictory but perhaps again, at least to one who scrutinizes words, they *are*! Certainly, Dewey does not *habitually* describe his philosophy, or any part of it, as "naturalistic metaphysics". Perhaps there is no error in diction in the description: perhaps the phrase just illuminates Mr. Santayana's artistic disposition in isolating such a phrase and playing his personal variations upon it, even at the risk of disturbing confidence in his competency as a critic of a contemporary's philosophy. His variations have their own fascination, to be sure, as he proceeds by what (for want of a more exact term) may be called "literary entelechy" in order to deploy the Santayanian ultimates: first, of "naturalism"; second, of "metaphysics"; third, of that fastigated irony which consum-

*Mr. Santayana may persuade himself that he is Spanish in his temperament: that he is atrophied in susceptibility to American characteristics.. Yet, to one who sees him against the context of the American mind, he is only the conventionally unhappy American disposed to refined leers at the comforts which permit him to relax and indulge his sighs. He is the American Exile, no matter where he is, what he may be doing, or what he may be thinking. He is in the good-old-fashioned Washington Irving tradition, a kind of Geoffrey Crayon with a philosophical Sketch Book, somewhat mawkish in his moonings over the Alhambra. He enjoys surveying the Ruins of Time—mostly of philosophy—a kind of American Marius the Epicurean, whose secret adoration and surreptitious oblations to Hermes, the god of thieves and messenger boys, are slyly confessed in his *Soliloquies in England*: actually, his *apologia*, written in a moment when his mask was lost. Gifted with delicately disciplined powers of wit, he has a sportive mischief (reminiscent of the Cheshire Cat) and indulges a benevolent melancholy, slightly disguised by ironic arts. He is the darling of philosophic decadents, the priestly Voice of The Great Harvard Sigh.

mates his verbal fugue. "Although I am myself a dogmatic naturalist," says Mr. Santayana, "I think the station assumed by Mr. Dewey, like the transcendental station generally, is always legitimate . . . any society or nation or living interest has the right to treat the world as its field of action, and to recast the human mind, as far as possible, so as to adapt it exclusively to that public function. That is what all great religions have tried to do . . . Why should not America attempt it?"

Even though his remarks seem to bear on his title, Mr. Santayana attempts to sap Mr. Dewey's pretensions to "naturalism" and to "metaphysics" but the upshot is a dilemma: either Mr. Dewey does not mean the same as Mr. Santayana does by the two words; or Mr. Santayana does not possess the power of reading Mr. Dewey's works unless Mr. Dewey writes what Mr. Santayana wants him to say. As an instance of Mr. Santayana's eristic stratagems at their best, his essay on "Dewey's Naturalistic Metaphysics" is *sui generis*. It is precious—as everything of Mr. Santayana's is precious—for its wise aperçus. Its lyrical moments are gem-like, with the hard purity of immaculate flame. Mr. Dewey's efforts to state the nature of "events" seem bald and bare beside Mr. Santayana's paraphrase of what he thinks Mr. Dewey means to say: "They are not arbitrary sections made in the flux of nature, as if by geometrical planes passed through the current of a river. They are natural waves, pulsations of being, each of which, without any interruption in its material inheritance and fertility, forms a unit of a higher order." The sentence is doubtless more poetical, really more beautiful, but like Pope's Homer, it isn't Dewey!

Though the entire Santayana essay is negligible as a criticism of Dewey's method or philosophy (because it is so wantonly misleading), would Mr. Dewey or his students object to appropriating one of Mr. Santayana's apt words ("a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pitchers of silver"!) and, in a sapient act of sutlery, conserve it for, and apply it in, needful moments? Casually, Mr. Santayana used the word "prehensile" to describe Mr. Dewey's method but prodigally made nothing of it. "But how should pragmatism," he inquires, "which is nothing if not pre-

¹THE PHILOSOPHY OF JOHN DEWEY, p. 250.

hensile, take root in this Eden?" One feels like Polonius, grasping at that word "*prehensile*"! Prehensilism would be a rewarding substitute for "pragmatism", "instrumentalism", "functionalism", or the other variants of the Deweyan procedures. If Mr. Santayana had not instantly resumed his cosmic fantasia in his rôle of Philosopher as Kubla Khan, if he had not immediately retreated to his rarefied, inaccessible, and dreamlike plateaux of some forbidden speculative Tibet, he might have paused and elaborated his description of pragmatism as "*prehensile*". By using that clue, returning to re-read Mr. Dewey's books, he might have discovered that Mr. Dewey has been struggling all these years to say just that: he might, further, have discovered that Mr. Dewey has been saying something quite different from what Mr. Santayana thought Mr. Dewey was saying.*

III

Whether or not John Dewey makes explicit "the implicit American philosophy" is a problem which no practising Deweyite, remaining loyal to modes of intellectual action Dewey himself has evoked, would venture to settle. About all he would hazard is what Daniel Webster said of Massachusetts: "There she stands!" Dewey, too, is a fact. His publications and their effects are part of America's mind still in the making, though not precisely in the sense intended by either Mr. Santayana or Mr. Bertrand Russell.

To ignore Mr. Dewey's works, or to resist their influence, is a conventionalized American attitude which, while it reveals something in the native disposition to depreciate indigenous produc-

*This is not the place for an attempt in the "*prehensilist*" manner to inquire how Mr. Santayana achieved his exilic detachment from the gross crudities of American civilization which materially sustained him for so long; nor, for that matter, is this the place to test the adequacy of his therapeutic. That therapeutic may be stated here, and then reserved for later discussion, when the second volume of *THE LIBRARY OF LIVING PHILOSOPHERS* (which will be devoted to George Santayana) appears: "To hypostasize human symbols . . . is not idolatry; but the remedy for idolatry is not iconoclasm," writes Mr. Santayana, justifying his essay on Dewey. "The remedy is rather to employ the symbols pragmatically, with detachment and humor, trusting in the steady dispensations of the substance beyond." Can "the substance beyond" be the "honey-dew of Paradise"? When Mr. Santayana says, "Just as the spirit has a right to soliloquize, and regard existence as a strange dream . . ." I am myself rudely reminded of Matthew Arnold's playful handling of his contemporary G. A. Sala's apostrophes to "life as a dream". If Mr. Santayana is not a kind of "Kubla Khan" among American philosophers, could he possibly be a G. A. Sala among the same group?

tions, does not exhaust the diversities discoverable in American Thinking. Those who, as technicians in philosophy, are competent to vocalize their admiration for Dewey and to expound their reasons for attachment to his philosophy, find continually pressing the task of communicating to an indifferent public the creative and unique dynamics of his method. What they may write (or say) is likely to become "semantic blanks" to those who, without knowing it, are already clumsy practitioners of the Dewey method.

On a significant occasion, Emerson delivered his "American Scholar" address—the gist of which was that the American scholar was to be distinguished by being "Man Thinking". Emerson's prospect was delectable. It called for a kind of faith in the mind that scholars, by the tricks and knaveries of their sequestered and secured condition, may lose if they concede too much to the exacting decorum of their profession and if, by an insidious substitution of deference and of "tact" for truth, they surrender imperative audacity which preserves their function from mere custodianship. "I had better never see a book," Emerson adjured his hearers, "than be warped by its attraction clean out of my own orbit, and made a satellite instead of a system. The one thing in the world, of value, is the active soul . . . Meek young men grow up in libraries, believing it their duty to accept the views which Cicero, which Locke, which Bacon, have given, forgetful that Cicero, Locke, and Bacon were only young men in libraries when they wrote those books."

Doubtless, Mr. Dewey would be surprised to learn that he both completes the prescriptions of Emerson's "The American Scholar" and refutes one of the most striking aperçus of that classic in the American tradition. Mr. Dewey's total intellectual act might almost seem to have been motivated by an intention to disprove Emerson's memorable statement in "The American Scholar": "Man Thinking must not be subdued by his instruments." Mr. Dewey's "instrumentalism" is precisely the method which valiantly shows how Man Thinking becomes improved by valiantly contradicting Emerson's exhortation. At the same time, paradoxically enough, Emerson himself succinctly stated the core of Deweyan thinking in his essay, "The Method of Nature"; "We may," said Emerson, ". . . safely study the mind in nature, because we cannot gaze on it in mind. . ."

Emerson altered somewhat the American tradition by the policy of displacement. He established the "set" of the American thinking frame sufficiently long to leave its effect still visible among us. He was keenly aware of the situation of which he was a part: he reacted violently against the regnant "materialism" of the 'forties and supplanted it for idealists by delineating a heavenly vision which, while it did not completely exorcise the American earthly aspiration for prosperity through business successes, invigorated emotionally emaciated young Americans of his day who transmitted it through their successors to us. Emerson "named" his situation with shrewd faith in the efficacy of primitive magic: he trusted to his "medicine" of transcendental verbalisms to banish the devil of Materialistic Yankeeism. "Things are in the saddle and ride mankind" is only one variant of his "medicine". His transcendentalism was a manipulation of mood induced by conceptual nebulosities, hinted at in his often-quoted aphorism: "Man is a bundle of thunderbolts." He set the pattern for the conventional "exile-at-home": a captive New Englander, eager for flight from the American chaos of the eighteen-thirties and forties: his intellectual disturbance and rebellion issuing in his passionate spiritual pilgrimages to Schelling, to Hindu Yoga, to the mathematician's Nirvana of "circles", and to the terrifying, however diaphanous, *Oversoul*.

Emerson's conception of the American scholar as "Man Thinking" assists one in assessing John Dewey. In Dewey's work one may see a unified and sustained variant of what Emerson desired: Dewey displays the arresting phenomenon of Man Thinking about the nature of Thinking-through-Doing.

In so far as he has done that, Dewey's total work supplies an implementation to Emerson's concept which justifies the American scholar in his function as Man Thinking. Emerson had an "instrumentalism" which, though implicit in all his essays, was explicitly stated in a little-known essay, "The Method of Nature". There he names it as *ecstasy*: "... there is," he said, "no private will, no rebel leaf or limb, but the whole is oppressed by one superincumbent tendency, obeys that redundancy or excess of life which in conscious beings we call ecstasy." "Ecstasy" was Emerson's word for what we today in physics might call the "indeterminant", in biology "emergent evolution" through "sports"

or "mutations", what bewildered political prophets are likely to call "the unpredictable", or "the incalculable". The word "ecstasy", as Emerson used it, expressed an anticipation of surprise-with-acceptance: he applied it specifically in these words: "It is true that he [a man] pretends to give account of himself to himself, but at last, what has he to recite but the fact that there is a Life not to be described or known otherwise than by possession?" Man can only know, in other words, what he has experienced, turned into knowledge, expressed, and reflected upon in the continuing process of correction, as the prehensive act enlarges his experience and increases his scope of inclusion with each succeeding tick of the clock.

There ought to be an antonym of Emerson's "ecstasy" to indicate Dewey's supplement to, and implement of, Emerson's "ecstasy". If there were such a word, it might be *enstasy*. But "*enstasy*" would not serve so accurately as an existing word which until now has been limited to biochemistry. The word "*diastase*" conveys the idea of a simultaneous process of separation and conversion through interaction, the agent of which is an "*amylase*", or enzyme which accelerates the hydrolysis of starch and glycogen to maltose, as in saliva and in germinating seeds. Dewey veered towards this "*diastase*" analogy when he wrote: "Some of my critics say that my philosophy does not tell them much about the environing world which is discovered when experience takes on the cognitive phase. I hope this statement, though offered as an indictment, is correct . . . The business of philosophy in logic or the theory of knowledge, is not to provide a rival account of the natural environment, but to analyze and report how and to what effect inquiries actually proceed, genetically and functionally, in their experiential context."

The Darwinian concept of ecology upon which Dewey analogically constructed his philosophical work is indeed quaint and incomplete to young minds today who, while accepting the Darwinian ecology, find it an incomplete or inadequate explanation of the relationship or interaction of the organism with its environment.* Dewey himself provides the completing, or implementing,

*If much of Dewey's science, scientific analogies, and nomenclature derived from science, seem to a young reader somewhat constricted, if this young reader fails to hear idioms, words, and analogical illustrations with which he is

answer in the purposive and controlled creativeness of his "instrumentalism", even though he fails to name it, and even though the phrasing involves a possible playing with prepositions: "the adaptation *of* environment to justify morally the concessive act necessitated by adaptation *to* environment." It would not be true to say that Emerson said more simply and memorably what Dewey has spent forty years saying in different ways, for different purposes, and for different applications. Yet Dewey's philosophy does not contradict nor supplant Emerson's: The two are mutually pendant, creating an adequate ratio of intelligence. "Nature," said Emerson, "can only be conceived to a universal and not to a particular end, to a universe of ends, and not to one, —a work of *ecstasy*, to be represented by a circular movement, as intention might be signified by a straight line of definite length. Each effect strengthens every other." Dewey's naturalism fills in the detail of Emerson's poetic generalizations, correcting the abortive and distortive inessentials of Emerson's semantic blanks when his generalizations soar beyond recognizable limits, beyond the checks or inhibitions of experientially warrantable restraints. Indeed, one may go further and venture the suggestion that until the Deweyan principle is employed upon the visions of the Concord Sage, Emerson's essays are likely to excite the wrong aspirations in the young and to stimulate them in wrong directions; but if the Deweyan "instrumentalism" is applied as a verifying device, the same essays may contrariwise inject the regenerating and sustaining aëration which Dewey has deliberately and rigorously repressed. Dewey's "diastase" of nature, imitated in the Deweyan instrumentalism, is a necessity where Emerson's "ecstasy" of nature is an understandable luxury. The "ecstasy" is sanctioned only, perhaps, as the "diastase" sanctions.

The value of Dewey's "diastase" may be expressed in another way to clarify its supplementary and functional quality as an "organon" for Emerson's "ecstasy". "Diastase" and "ecstasy"

more familiar, the reason may be that Dewey's deference and docility to particular sciences in a period of rapid development and corrections led him to seize immature frames of reference prematurely. Yet even though he was left behind in accepting what are now obviously "dateable" scientific assumptions and constructs, his vigorous and critical mind pressed beyond the limitations of the bounded universe of those sciences (or their adjusting phases) to which he lent a willing and eager ear during his formative period. He anticipated the dynamism and continuities of the newer physics, biology, and biochemistry.

describe the basically creative satisfactions of the human spirit which periodically secure, in their actual operation, armed truces in the incessant conflicts and crises of energetic and unyielding minds in contact with nature and society. Emerson, inclined to cosmic calm, saw the happy and tranquil peace of reconciled antagonisms in his apocalyptic vision: Dewey insists on the needful and factitious disruptions of false and premature intellectual calm. By doing so, he supplies the instrument by which minds are kept in healthy action and prevented from fatigued flaggings and inordinate relaxations to unworthy rest. Of the two possibilities for mental peace, Dewey throws all his strength towards the second: peace may be secured by avoiding responsibilities or by adjusting difficulties. To quote Dewey himself: "Peace in action, not after it, is the contribution of the ideal in conduct."¹⁰ Diastase is not the identification of the mind with nature—"the dewdrop which falls into the shining sea", to quote Sir Edwin Arnold—but it is the process of the alterations, both in the individual and in his environment by the individual's intelligent inquiry to test the warrantability of assertions about experience through deliberate and controlled investigations of nature and of human nature in their workings. Intellectual peace is certainly not the enjoyment of unearned increments of great thinkers and sages, hedonistically consumed in a state of moral and intellectual relaxations: it is not the enjoyment of the priceless deposits of the past, either of analytical thinkers or of poets' vision, in an opium dream reminiscent of Coleridgean fantasies. "I regard the philosophy of any period," says Dewey,¹¹ "as a reflex of larger and more far-reaching cultural achievements, needs, conflicts, and problems . . . I have approached our cultural 'heritage' as a critic and reconstructor of tradition . . . forever bringing men's past experience with ideas to the test of present experience."

If Emerson's transcendental method may be described as vision-into-version, Dewey's naturalistic method may be described as its opposite and supplement: namely, "version-into-new-vision" with ameliorative effects upon the inquirer in the act of controlled inquiry. The identifying nexus between Emerson and Dewey is their untiring adhesion to "vision" (what Dewey repeatedly calls

¹⁰Dewey: HUMAN NATURE AND CONDUCT, p. 236.

¹¹THE PHILOSOPHY OF JOHN DEWEY, p. 522.

"value"), though the stress on "vision" in Emerson's works is greater than in Dewey's. When Dewey uses the word "vision" (as in his distinction between "inner" and "outer" vision) he means something quite different from what Emerson meant in using the word. Dewey's main effort has been in eliciting and disseminating the techniques of discovery, or "version". Dewey's reverence for "insights" (another variant of Emerson's "vision") is no less constant and profound, even though he nowhere defines its meaning. The "insights" are the earned increments of the willed effort of the inquirer's mind in the condition of "diastase". Diastase seeks the controlled conditions and implements for alterations, with an ameliorative intention, of the environment as the inquirer cultivates an attitude of naïveté in his contacts with nature and society. It is an "imitation of nature" insofar as it is an acceptance of the mind as natural in its processes, verbally communicable as a biochemical analogy. "Nothing less than a revolution in the 'seat of intellectual authority' has taken place," writes Dewey. "This revolution . . . is the central thing. In this revolution, every defeat is a stimulus to renewed inquiry; every victory won is open door to more discoveries, and every discovery is a new seed planted in the soil of intelligence, from which grow fresh plants with new fruits. The mind of man is being habituated to a new method and ideal: There is but one sure road of access to truth—the road of patient, cooperative inquiry operating by means of observations, experiment, record, and controlled reflection."¹²

IV

What, in closing, may be said for Dewey's place in the American scale of direction?

The correlations of Emerson and Dewey are less obvious than their contrasts, yet at least one of those contrasts must be noticed. Emerson possessed something which Dewey plainly lacks: a "something" which may account for his failure of communication, attested by the neglect of the populace in America to accept him as their Voice: their secretary. Dewey's device of "cultivated naïveté", unquestionably efficient as it is in evoking the state of

¹²John Dewey: *A COMMON FAITH*, p. 82.

curiosity about natural and social problems long ago supposed to have been settled, has not been employed by him in the investigation of expression. That is not to impeach his style: a style which has its own sturdy robustness, precise effect, and compelling honesty. Blunt as the assertion may be, it is nevertheless desperately "illiterate": "illiterate" in the sense that though it eliminates the snares and delusions of tricky rhetoric, it also excludes the delights and revelations of verbal overtones. Dewey's efforts to detonate his style have resulted in a Vermont-granite baldness of diction. In his attempt to state complex and intricate matters scientifically, he has (for all of his success in plain homespun) achieved a destitute effect of stylistic impoverishment.

A vast range of rich human experience has eluded him because of his voluntary enlistment as a nominalist: in his implicit depreciation of verbal-realism. Verbalisms are also part of human experience: to ignore them, or to denounce them, hardly conforms to his own theory of "logic". Where, in other words, is Dewey's concern for the substantive and evocative power of words? Where has he employed his instrumentalism on the vexing problems of verbal semantics? Dewey's naturalism is left incomplete: it obviously compels his allegiance to nominalism which leaves, in the ambivalency of experience, an atrophied or halting response in his reader: a painful sense of lethargy or stupor in what seems to be a wanton neglect of the possibilities of word-witcheries. Emerson assuredly was not a verbal-realist, either; yet Emerson gained his plebiscite of approval by his adroit and chromatic employments of words. Words in patterned designs are, one protests, as much a part of one's environment as are nature and social institutions. For tough-minded people, accustomed to the brutalities of scientific and denoted diction, Dewey's style may be effective because it is a straight-forward affair, indicating immense intellectual effort in precision: yet it becomes difficult even for hardened readers because he craftily uses familiar words (like "logic", "method", and "vision") to make them mean, like Professor Humpty-Dumpty of ALICE IN WONDERLAND, what Dewey wants them to mean. The total effect is that of a literary style stripped of memorable allusiveness, feeble in fable, monotonous both in tonal emphasis and in the unrelieved Vermont earnestness of Dewey's mood. In his impressive search for uncertainty,

he resembles many other American Seekers who have never pondered on the profundity of the Elizabethan who said: "Whosoever in writing a modern History shall follow truth too near the heeles, it may haply strike out his teeth."

Thanks to his confessed private séances with Hegel which effected his sharp reaction and resistance to Hegelianism, Dewey has devised a formula for factitious stupidity³¹ which is handsomely demonstrable in confounding contemporary political and economic Oracles: a formula which supplements the Socratic "Know thyself" by insisting upon the necessity to "know thyself by knowing *for* thyself in controlled conditions of action: take nothing for granted which does not stand the test of experiment." Dewey's contra-Hegelianism is a construct which provides a normative correction of suppositious and apocalyptic assertions of Marxian materialism. It deflates the prevalent efflatus of visionary or precipitate Communism. Conversely, it generates a wholesome scepticism of *solitairism* illustrated by Thoreau and Gandi.

To preserve and extend the influence of Dewey, his exponents and admirers must apply his method to his own books. To neglect to do so would be a betrayal or cancellation of his influence. Re-examination of his assertions and exhumation of his assumptions (which several of the contributors to *THE PHILOSOPHY OF JOHN DEWEY* magnificently demonstrate) can be most effectively sustained, one supposes, by discovering new points of direction, even of disparates and of disjunctions, to renovate the device of "assumed naïveté" and to keep it from becoming a sterile "ignorantism", transmitted by a prematurely sanctifying process

³¹It would be exceedingly presumptuous for me, or for anyone else, to affirm that Professor Dewey is even "factitiously" stupid without making some effort to clarify the meaning intended. Professor Dewey's works are eminently wise, with a wisdom born of experience: his immense learning has not clogged the action of his mind. What I mean by "factitious stupidity" is what Walter Bagehot meant when he wrote in the Third Letter of 1851 for the *Enquirer*: "I fear you will laugh when I tell you what I conceive to be about the most essential mental quality for a free people, whose liberty is to be progressive, permanent, and on a large scale; it is much stupidity. . . What we opprobriously call stupidity, though not an enlivening quality in common society, is Nature's favorite resource for preserving steadiness of conduct and consistency of opinion. It enforces concentration; people who learn slowly learn only what they must. The best security for people's doing their duty is that they should not know anything else to do; the best security for fixedness of opinion is, that people should be incapable of comprehending what is to be said on the other side."

evoked by his name. Certain members of his "school" (like Irwin Edman) have made the laudable effort to find a workable co-ordinate in George Santayana and have undoubtedly succeeded in early public acceptance as poetic *prosateurs*. Others (like Sidney Hook and V. F. Calverton) are moving in the direction of Marx for an adequate co-ordinate.

Perhaps the most promising co-ordinate may be found in the work of Charles Sanders Peirce, toward which there is a perceptible drift in the more alert Deweyites who, having learned from John Dewey how to build a nest, must learn from Peirce what to put in the nest. If Dewey may be thought of as a teacher's philosopher (or a teacher-of-philosophy's philosopher), then Peirce may be seriously regarded as, to use John Dewey's own tribute, a philosopher's philosopher. Both William James and John Dewey represent a completed development (with individual additions and shifts of emphases) of one erg of Peirce's original thinking. Both Dewey and James conveniently responded to the pressures of their immediate national cultural environment, becoming philosophic articulators of the American mood at particular "moments" and will always retain at least historic value for that response and articulation. They have served a necessary and laudable purpose in preparing American sensibility for the neglected Peirce whose obscurity will diminish as the defects in the American sensibility become more widely evident to Americans influenced by James and Dewey.

The disposition to learn has been an effect of the instrumentalist discipline but, having learned *a method*, the pragmatic Deweyites will not be permanently satisfied with not putting it to work where the necessity is most insistent: namely, in the area of most confusing human experience; the semantics of symbols, including words and their meanings, in the instrumental problems of expression. This was Peirce's chief field of inquiry in which among, Dewey's exponents, Mr. Kenneth Burke is penetrating with interesting results.

The addition of Dewey's disciples to "events" and "situations" which serves as an "hypostasis of the instrument" may operate as a check towards too complete saturation and identification of the mind with instruments of expression (words in syntax, or in total physical states of users-of-words in describable situations)

which has overtaken and deflected Thomists and "wastelanders" alike. The functional or instrumental values of situations-in-words will be realized as they become occasions of inquiry.

If Professor Whitehead is right in affirming that "John Dewey is the typical effective American thinker, and he is the chief intellectual force providing that environment with coherent purpose", then John Dewey appears to have made a hypostatic identification of himself (reminiscent of Whitman) with "the American folk". The hypostasis is plainly incomplete, because in his professional capacity as academic philosopher, Dewey has been conditioned by the pressures and permissions of his craft even though he has succeeded somewhat in liberalizing those pressures and permissions by infusing in them the American folk-drive towards revision under the sanctions of "reconstruction". Incomplete though Dewey's work is even in that sphere, it presents an assessible "moment" or "phase" of American intellectual experience. He has his admirers, his disciples, and his "school". He has laid, in other words, a "tradition" within which operations will proceed, excited by different motives, employing different processes, and arriving at conflicting results. The least desirable prospect is the possibility that he will become just another name in the history of American thought: that he will become the object of reverence and of adoration by those whose minds have been invigorated by exposure to him, by those who will fail to carry his invention of assumed naïveté into regions he has not experienced.

It is not enough to say, with Santayana and Russell, that Dewey exhibits *An American Thinking*, because so many Americans, sufficiently literate to read his works do not know what he is saying. One would suppose, if John Dewey is as American as he is claimed to be by his admirers and by some of his more caustic and unapproving critics, that Americans would find him easy reading, and would obviously adopt him as their Spokesman and Voice. Yet they have not done so; and the fact is disturbing, not to say baffling. He is no more accepted as "the-Typical-American-Thinking" than Walt Whitman is accepted as "the-Average-American-singing". Perhaps the reason is that America—though

it has "come-of-age"—has not yet sufficiently matured to risk looking at its own reflection: in one mode by Whitman, and in another, by Dewey. Neither Whitman nor Dewey (nor Whitman-plus-Dewey!) will complete the effort to disclose the seething, fermenting *soup* of American consciousness, but they *do* disclose directions, compulsory for notice by curious researchers in this pluralistic and evolving American culture, in our social complexities. Whitman and Dewey have their value because they accepted America, standing markedly in contrast with those other Americans excited by Emerson who, like Margaret Fuller and Ralph Waldo Trine, "accepted the universe". By accepting America, Dewey may have missed something in his lack of astronomical embraces but he gained something which those of larger focus missed in their larger focal blur.

by Ralph Gustafson

OLD METAPHOR

Whenever this proud flesh shall fail
And other lovers mock my time,
Oh then read back a little space,
A little while turn back
That interim.

And there will be, as I have learned
Of other lovers who have gone,
Old metaphor and rusty phrase
And all that's said outworn
To look upon.

But you shall pause amid these things,
And think a while of other love,
And wonder quietly on that,
And this, and much you are
Forgetful of.

by Frederick P. Gay

THE OPEN MIND:

ELMER ERNEST SOUTHARD—1876-1920 by Frederick P. Gay; 1938. Chicago, Normandie House. \$5.00 pp. 324.

Into the writing of this autobiography of Elmer Ernest Southard by his friend and classmate, Dr. Gay, has gone a vast amount of that loyalty, enthusiasm and awe for a man of indubitable genius that his unusual intellect aroused in all with whom it came into contact. The book is made up, not only of Dr. Gay's own personal memories of Dr. Southard, but memories and impressions of the man from letters, to or from him, and from impressions of his friends, the men and women with whom he worked, his students and his intimate friends. All agree as to the singularity of Southard's personality and to his influence in the multiple activities he followed which reach far beyond his own generation.

Dr. Gay has prepared the book with minute care for detail. He has gone thoroughly into the details of Southard's life and has limned a picture of the man, his profound intelligence, the dynamic mind which could master several disciplines and carry along several activities in a short time, where the average man can only compass two or three during his entire career. Gay tells of his ability as a pathologist which was made apparent during the freshman year at the Harvard Medical School. He was influenced to study medicine by his work with William James in his undergraduate years at Harvard College, in which his interest was stimulated by the abnormalities of the human mind. Later, his capabilities as educator and director of the destinies of several State hospitals and private institutions, was profoundly affected by his early psychological training. His dream of a psychopathic hospital in Boston which later materialized and his years as director of that hospital, the many researches begun by him, are still being carried on by physicians, scientists, social workers, and students in places far from the site of his work.

Dr. Gay devotes an entire chapter to Southard's side-interests,

philology, etymology and philosophy which began in his college days and continued throughout his short life. The study of philology aided him greatly in his psychiatric career for his training in semantics made the meaning of the obscurities encountered in this field much clearer. His mastery of words was phenomenal, his use of unusual words was the delight and at times, the despair of his friends. In many instances, it led to the dislike of Southard by those with limited vocabularies who felt he was affecting an erudition he did not possess.

The book relates how Southard's devotion to philosophy almost cut short his career as a pathologist since anything savoring of "metaphysics" was suspect among the medical profession in the early days of his career, though Southard made an outstanding record in autopsy service of the Boston City Hospital, there were grave doubts as to the qualification for pathology because of his connection with William James. This was, however, justified and he was made a regular interne at the Boston City Hospital Pathological Laboratory in 1901, where he rose in successive years to become second assistant visiting pathologist in 1905.

In 1902, Southard went to Germany for a year of study in neurology, assisted by the bestowal of the Bullard Fellowship. His teaching career began with an instructorship in neuropathology under the supervision of the Department of Pathology at Harvard Medical School, and in 1906 he was promoted to an assistant professorship. He was writing numerous scientific papers on his subject at that time. In that same year, Southard married and was appointed to the post of Assistant Physician and Pathologist of the Danvers State Hospital. While there, Southard started research in many lines, investigations into the cause of epidemics which occurred from time to time in Massachusetts mental hospitals and which illustrated the need for an adequate laboratory service in connection with the work of mental institutions, as well as for research in mental disease. This was an innovation since the function of mental hospitals was then purely custodial.

In 1909, when Southard was appointed the Bullard Professor of Neuropathology at Harvard Medical School he was also appointed to the position of Pathologist to the Massachusetts State Board of Insanity, a position which gave him responsibility for seventeen state institutions and twenty-three private hospitals.

In these, as he had at Danvers, he emphasized the need for research as vital for the progress of psychiatry.

It was during this period that the idea for a psychopathic hospital to serve metropolitan Boston was born. The plan for an institution where patients with mental disease might be received for observation, diagnosis and treatment to be eventually separated into groups of those who needed to be permanently committed to mental hospitals and those who could safely be released into society after a period of treatment, underlaid the plan for the psychopathic hospital. Dr. Southard worked quietly and unobtrusively with others for this plan and it was started as a Psychopathic Department of the Boston State Hospital. This was far from the visualization that Southard had of the hospital and it was not until after his death that there was a separation of the two institutions and The Psychopathic Hospital became a self-governing unit. Dr. Southard was the first director of the Psychopathic Department of the Boston State Hospital.

Southard was at all times an individualist and an original thinker and he turned his energies to the difficult task of shaping the new departmental policy and organizing the various divisions and subdivisions of the new unit along progressive lines. He again emphasized research in mental diseases as one of the important reasons for the hospital's existence, starting many lines of important investigations into fields of medicine which had previously received only scant observation.

Among other things, Dr. Southard is credited with the chief early support of the Child-Guidance movement which grew into a nation-wide work. He also started research with Dr. W. P. Lucas on the Child Neurology with special attention to epilepsy and congenital syphilis. This led to an investigation of Neurosyphilis, which later became a state-wide research, with Dr. H. C. Solomon. Alcoholism also captured Southard's attention and he was particularly impressed with the social need which alcoholic cases express and the fact that hydrotherapy was superior treatment to restraint over drugs.

Although Dr. Southard remained skeptical all his days as to the utility of the Freudian technique, he was sufficiently liberal to provide opportunities for experiment and study in this field at the Boston Psychopathic Hospital. His early training with James

made him incline to the philosophic trend in psychology and he was never able to accept what he thought of as the pessimism and pansexualism of Freud.

At all times he was an educator and an organizer as well as an untiring investigator. The stimulus he gave to the work at the Boston Psychopathic Hospital, to his classes at Harvard and elsewhere still burns in living men, women and movements. The psychiatric training of nurses and psychiatric social workers, who carry on the task begun by the hospitals after the patients are discharged are monuments to his foresight. The latter was probably one of the most important movements instigated by Dr. Southard because of its far-reaching influence in occupational and vocational psychiatry.

Gay pictures Dr. Southard as a research worker more than a clinician, more an executive than a working psychiatrist. He more readily analyzed what was revealed in his patients and "embellished this with comments which came from his brilliant insight into psychiatric problems in wide relationship." He was more an "integrator, or one who taking the findings of various associates fits them together and made his diagnosis from the fitted whole." He became a master of this art. Southard's knowledge of psychiatry, Gay says, was profound, his conception of the subject "was one which related it to the rest of human life—which is a point of view too many psychiatrists never get."

Southard's amazing energy took him also into the fields of feeble-mindedness and dementia-praecox which he renamed "schizophrenia" which he thoroughly studied and described.

The World War opened the way for the investigation of shell-shock and military psychiatry and Dr. Southard was prominent in this work. He was in Washington for a time attached to the Chemical Warfare Service but his main contribution to the War years was his study of Shell Shock and his educational work in that connection.

Southard wrote and published one hundred and eighty scientific articles as well as three books during his years of productivity, as well as other writing on education, social work, philology and psychology. He also wrote poetry and short stories at varied intervals all his life. In collaboration with Mary C. Jarrett, he

wrote "The Kingdom of Evils" in which he elaborated his plan for handling the evils which confront humanity.

Gay also pictures Southard as a "man foursquare". His profound intellectual powers were enhanced by a charming and magnetic personality, in which there was more than a touch of whimsy and playfulness. He had the ability to draw people and hold them in a loyalty that was unique in itself. He seldom met anyone, according to Gay, who did not later become loyally attached to him, for his kindness and thoughtfulness were even more instinctive with him than his intelligence and originality. There was always time in his life for friendship.

However such originality and individuality, coupled with the gifts of language, dynamic energy, enthusiasms and whimsical playfulness would not fail to rouse the jealously-minded people and the antagonism of small minds and Southard had more than his share of criticism. He was not without prejudice himself, but his dislikes, according to Gay, were based on resentment of intellectual snobbery rather than on personal opposition.

The book suffers somewhat from being written by a personal friend whose intense admiration, affection and loyalty may color too highly an undoubtedly high character for one is left with an impression that Gay, in his natural enthusiasm for Southard, has been blind to everything but his many outstanding, fine traits and his genius.

There are appendices in the book which will interest readers. They contain samples of Southard's poetry, stories and genealogical surveys as well as lists of journals on which he served in editorial capacities and a list of his memberships in scientific societies.

by *T. P. Govan*

FAITH IN DEMOCRACY

DEMOCRACY TODAY AND TOMORROW. By Edward Benes. 244 pp. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1939. \$3.00.

One year ago Czecho-Slovakia, the single democracy created by the first World War, was sacrificed by the two great democratic powers of Europe to bring peace "for our time". Today, those two powers are fighting, not for democracy, not against Hitlerism, in spite of their protestations, but for the protection of their own power and prestige and for the right of the present ruling groups within the two countries to continue their rule.

Yet the very nature of the conflict will make of this war, as it did of the last one, "a struggle for the democratization of the modern world." For, as President Benes in his introduction to these lectures delivered last spring at the University of Chicago says:

"Whatever has happened recently or may happen during the next years in Europe and in the remainder of the world, in the end this ideal [democracy] must be victorious, as it is the expression of general human morality and modern civilization and is alone worthy of Twentieth century humanity. It will be victorious, because it is also the law of social evolution and of the philosophy of history."

These confident words, certain of the future, will not convince those who deny the possibility of a "law of social evolution", who believe that history is only a succession of events without pattern or form. But, it must be remembered, they were not written by a closeted philosopher, but by a very practical politician who successfully led his country for twenty long and arduous years until it was forced to destroy itself by those who pretended to be its friends.

President Benes is much more than a politician, no little thing in itself. He is also a historian and political philosopher. Few, if any, of the presidential addresses of our political and historical

societies approach the quality of these lectures. Never does he plead for himself or his people. His analysis of the causes of the rise of the totalitarian states is as unimpassioned as if it had occurred on Mars; but he is an impassioned democrat.

And his democracy is not a sterile or static thing, it is living, breathing, ever growing and changing in the direction of more and greater liberty for every individual.

He says: "The bourgeois postwar European society is just now waging a new life-and-death struggle of enormous dimensions. It is a struggle both for the preservation of political democracy against the right wing totalitarian dictatorships on the one side and for the solution of social problems in the spirit and in the framework of political democratic institutions against the communist system on the other. In my opinion, it is a struggle for the transformation of the old, purely political bourgeois democracy which I will call humanitarian democracy. This system should try to save the political and personal freedom and dignity of the individual citizen and, on the other hand, should prepare the transformation of the present liberal economic and social system into a more human and just society, with a higher degree of social and economic justice."

He does not underestimate the strength of the anti-democratic forces within the so-called democratic countries as well as among the totalitarians. He does not ignore or attempt to excuse the many mistakes of the democratic statesmen of Europe and America in recent years, but he sees the present crisis as a minor phase in a larger historical epoch, and he has faith for the future.